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DEBJANI GANGULY is Professor of English and Director of the Institute of the Humanities and Global Cultures at the University of Virginia. She is the author of *This Thing Called the World: The Contemporary Novel as Global Form* (2016) and *Caste, Colonialism and Counter-Modernity* (2005). She is also the General Editor of the CUP book series Cambridge Studies in World Literature and Culture.

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Edited by
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Introduction

DEBJANI GANGULY

Contemporary Conjunctures

World literature dwells in our time and in times past. As a treasured heritage of artistic expression in oral, visual, and written forms, it is an indelible part of the story of evolution of human civilization. As a scholarly field, however, world literature has had a rather sporadic presence in the disciplinary landscape of modern universities, surging and receding in accordance with political and sociocultural transformations. The contemporary era is witnessing one such resurgence. The term *world* appears to have made a spectacular reentry as a literary critical rubric in the twenty-first century. One hears of the "world" all too frequently in academic circles, and in ways that mark our current global conjuncture as, perhaps, the most apposite moment for its articulation. One is reminded of Walter Benjamin's phrase "the *now* of knowability" when certain historical periods offer just the right temporal traction for an idea to gain rhetorical currency. The term *world* now appears to inhabit its true potential as the philological and literary home of maximal extension and maximal connectivity. Questions about what the specificity of the literary has to offer in grasping the complex relationship between the *globe* and the *world* have provoked substantial philosophical and historical deliberation in recent years (Ronen 1994; Nancy 2007; Ramachandran 2015; Cheah 2016.). Key to these deliberations is the fundamental difference between ontologies of literary worldmaking (the realm of aesthetics and cultural expression over time) and of capitalist globalization (the realm of material and geo-cultural standardization). The *longue durée* of the former, in particular, reanimates questions about the play of temporalities in our global present that are of particular significance to a literary historian.

The emergence of globalization as an expansive conduit for cultural and intellectual exchange and unprecedented levels of connectivity of world populations, through information and communication technologies, are

significant enough to make literary scholars in the twenty-first century radically rethink the processes of literary production, distribution, and consumption beyond familiar national and regional boundaries. Significant in our digital era is the expansion of the idea of literature beyond print. Works today are read, filmed, televised, and multi-mediated across myriad screen and software technologies: cinema, television, the personal computer, smartphones, digital tablets, and social media platforms. Literature today is an intermedial form and experiential phenomenon whose travels can no longer be tracked only through libraries, publishing circuits, and print public spheres. The phrase "virtual bibliomigrancy" captures this digital transformation of conventional modalities of circulation. Vast repositories of scholarly material now reside in our laptops (Mani 2017: 219). Computational methods of literary analysis, in turn, deal with scales that defy traditional methods of literary criticism focused on close reading of a handful of texts. Digital technologies give literary worlds a reach and amplitude scarcely available in previous eras.

With so many works produced, circulated, and received, often in translation, at the interstices of local, national, and international borders, the axes of comparison have become very complex and are no longer based primarily on national and regional differences.[1] Who and what the *world* is to which world literature refers, and is constituted by, are questions that ramify urgently in the field. Geographically speaking, it no longer appears adequate to envision a world literary space determined solely by postcolonial geographies of French, Spanish, and British empires and their liberated colonies. The fall of the Berlin War and the collapse of the Soviet imperium have reconfigured Europe and Central Asia, generating in the process new literary constellations, and new ideas of world literature. No less significant has been the global impact of a vocal, visible, and non-territorial demographics of the Muslim world, urging comparativists to engage actively with writing from the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa. Multilingual literary cultures everywhere see their literatures circulate along different, often unpredictable, axes and urge us to attend to these movements. Projects of Afro-Asian and Latin American literary solidarity from the Bandung era have generated a reconceptualization in our time of the erstwhile third world as the postcolonial and the global south. These have opened avenues of circulation and translation, and have produced particular versions of the world. World

1 A detailed exposition of ideas in this paragraph appears in my works, Ganguly 2008 and 2016.

literature has positioned itself from the early years of this century as a mode of literary engagement uniquely suited to our vastly mixed, culturally interactive, and digitally connected age.

Important scholarly debates in world literature emerged in the final decade of the twentieth century specifically in relation to the consolidation of postcolonial literary and cultural theory within Euro-American academia. For example, several issues of the journal *World Literature Today* in the 1990s, under the editorship of Djelal Kadir, recast world literature as literary postcolonialism. Sarah Lawall's volume *Reading World Literature: Theory, History, Practice* appeared in 1994. The outcome of a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)-funded pedagogical workshop, Lawall's project heralded the advent of world literature as a cultural rubric of *fin de siècle* and the new millennium. The revival of world literature has as its geopolitical backdrop the end of the Cold War, the proliferation of global conflicts and civil wars, the end of apartheid in South Africa, genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda, the spectacular catastrophe of 9/11, the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the violent ravaging of the Middle East by the conjoined interests of the global power elites and fundamentalisms of various hues. The postcolonial enterprise brought literary worlds from the erstwhile European colonies of Africa, Asia, and Latin America into the departments of English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese literatures. While this went a long way toward globalizing these fields, there emerged a perception in some quarters that postcolonial theory appeared too fixated on worlds generated by European colonialism of the past centuries to reckon with the churning of the world order at the end of the second millennium (see Hardt and Negri 2000). Further, very few postcolonial scholars worked with non-European language archives. Departments of comparative literature, for long custodians and disseminators of European literatures and high theory, also experienced an epistemic crisis at the turn of the century, as is evident from works such as *Death of a Discipline* (Spivak 2003), and *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization* (Saussy 2006). Comparativists were urged to think and work beyond the national literary traditions of Europe – French, German, Italian, Spanish – and break through silos generated by disciplinary divisions that positioned literatures from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and those from Sanskrit, Arabic, Turkish, and Persian traditions outside departments of comparative literature. Comparativists were also urged to attend to new genres and theoretical fields that the digital revolution, globalization studies, and the world-systems paradigm brought into view. Postcolonial literature, a significant precursor to, and a catalyst for, the contemporary emergence of

the idea of world literature, focused primarily on works from the erstwhile colonies of Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal, and usually those produced in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. Non-European and minor European literatures – Chinese, Arabic, Persian, Japanese, Slavic, Scandinavian, Korean, Sanskrit, Swahili, Tamil, Hindi – continued to be located in area studies departments (especially in the United States) with few scholars venturing beyond their zones of specialization. English literature flourished as the field of anglophone writing expanded exponentially beyond Britain, America, Canada, and Australia. But these fields were rarely in conversation with each other. These are the conditions of possibility for the contemporary revival of world literature – a capacious rubric that functions across the chasms and crossroads of these various literary fields, even as it is critically attuned to our rapidly changing geopolitical, cultural, technological, and planetary landscapes.

Three important manifestos at the turn of the century signposted some key developments: Franco Moretti's "Conjectures on World Literature" (2000), Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* ([1999] 2004), and David Damrosch's *What Is World Literature?* (2003). Quite appositely, they do not speak of world literature as a timeless canon of classics; but neither do they engage in any depth with postcolonial and non-Western literary traditions, thus leaving the field wide open for reinterpretation and calibration by literary historians. The signal contribution of each has been the creation of a conceptual apparatus that has helped scale up literary engagement to encompass and reconfigure forms, genres, histories, languages, translational endeavors, technologies, and circulatory patterns that have hitherto existed as discrete constellations in distinct disciplinary homes. Three models from the social, biological, and information sciences – world-systems theory, evolutionary theory, and network studies – inflect their approaches to the field. Moretti's conjectures have unleashed an avalanche of responses from scholars around the world on theories of the novel, world-systems approaches, evolutionary theories of diffusion, and modes of reading.[2] His advocacy of distant reading as against the favored pedagogy of close reading, and his evolutionary schema of origins and diffusion of literary forms in wave-like patterns have generated a plethora of work, especially in the digital realm (Bode, Chapter 39, Volume II). His adaptation of world-systems theory that operates on a logic of diffusion from (European) centers to peripheries

2 An early volume that captured this phenomenon is Prendergast 2004; first published as a special issue of *New Left Review*, 20 (March–April 2003).

has attracted substantial criticism for short-changing the aspirations of a field committed to multidirectional worldmaking. David Damrosch's book offers some foundational premises about world literature as an entity that gains in translation, and that circulates across myriad foci in an elliptical forcefield. Damrosch has since produced an astonishing array of collaborative works – theoretical, pedagogical, encyclopaedic, anthological – that have helped consolidate world literature as a major field in the twenty-first century. In 2011 he established an itinerant Institute for World Literature to train a new generation of scholars across the globe. Casanova's canonical work situates world literature as an international field marked by competition over symbolic and cultural capital. Historically framed by the emergence of three worldmaking linguistic-literary revolutions – in Latin, German, and French – Casanova's book has generated agitated debates about the provincialism of a field that annexes millennia-long histories of literary production from non-European worlds into a historiographical framework centered in Europe, with Paris as the greenwich meridian of literary value. The past twenty years have seen an outpouring of publications that not only reckon with the postcolonial and global implications of this paradigm but also offer wide-ranging perspectives from multiple literary traditions.[3]

Historiographical Conundrum

This contemporary conjuncture notwithstanding, the idea of world literature goes back in time, not just to the foundations of literary studies as a discipline in the late nineteenth century, but to humankind's civilizational endeavors since antiquity. How does a literary historian contend with such temporal disjunctions and continuities? To compile a history of world literature is in some sense to attempt the impossible. Can one truly capture 5,000 years of human expressivity in oral and graphic forms? What civilizational worlds does one foreground, and at the cost of what other worlds? One viable approach might be to anthologize these riches in an array of languages with the hope that they will be read by a wide swathe of humanity. There is no dearth of such anthologies in the global marketplace. A recent monumental anthological enterprise, the six-volume *Longman Anthology of World Literature*, is arguably one such influential canon-making project (see Mukherjee, Chapter 38, Volume II). Anthologies from previous eras

3 Recent significant publications in the field include Rosendahl 2008; Ramazani 2009; Hayot 2012; Apter 2013; Beecroft 2015, WreC 2015; Allan 2016; Cheah 2016; Ganguly 2016; Mufti 2016; Mani 2017; Walkowitz 2017; and Bhattacharya 2019.

generated canons of their own that were often exclusionary. For example, the *Masterpieces of World Literature: Ancient and Modern*, published in 1898 and edited by Harry Thurston, scarcely featured any African literature except for ancient Egyptian love songs and works by European writers on Africa that interpreted the continent to the rest of the world. Until the late twentieth century with Sarah Lawall's *Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces* (1995), no major African writer featured in such anthologies (see Esonwanne, Chapter 17, Volume I). The process of canonization through anthologies compels one to think about such exclusions, ruptures, and continuities across space and time.

To confront yet another conundrum, what do 1848, 1905, 1914, 1939, 1945, 1949, 1968, 1989, 1994, 2001, and 2003 signify for a historian of world literature? Each date in this temporal arc marks an event of significant global consequence from which has erupted new instantiations of world literature. The revolutions of 1848 in post-Napoleonic Europe propelled Marx and Engels to herald the arrival of world literature as an idea suited to an age of international markets and the rise of the bourgeoisie. The year 1905 marks the first partition of Bengal in British India by Lord Curzon and the beginning of partition politics in the twentieth century that subsequently led to the catastrophic division of India and Israel in 1947–48. The 1905 partition was the catalyst for Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's exhortation on world literature (*Viśvasāhitya*) as an index of civilizational connectivity against aggressively imposed political divisions. Other recognizable dates across the arc mark the catastrophic world wars of the first half of the twentieth century; the horrors of Nazism; the end of modern European colonialism, and the emergence of a decolonial/postcolonial era; the creation of Israel; the rise of the Soviet Union; Mao's Cultural Revolution; the rise of the new left with the 1968 social and political movements; the fall of the Berlin Wall; the end of apartheid in South Africa; the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia; 9/11; and the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These have variously generated tracts on world literature by Maxim Gorky, Zheng Zhenduo, Richard Moulton, Eric Auerbach, Victor Klemperer, Rene Etiemble, Edward Said, Franco Moretti, David Damrosch, Haun Saussy, Djelal Kadir, B. Venkat Mani, Pheng Cheah, Lital Levy, Emily Apter, and Aamir Mufti, to name only a few. While such a perennially open-ended temporal frame cannot offer a strong foundation for a coherent literary history, the undoubted relation between a revolutionary or catastrophic world event and the emergence of an ecumenical literary vision cannot fail to capture the attention of a historian of world literature.

If one turns from this *worldly* history of the field to its *philological* antecedents, we encounter another story that complicates this historiographical endeavor. This is the emergence of the idea of world literature in parallel with the rise of philology as one of the three key epistemes in the human sciences in the nineteenth century, the other two being comparative anatomy and political economy – the knowledge of "Labor, Life and Language," as Foucault writes in *The Order of Things*. The philological revolution transformed the idea of language as a medium of knowledge to language itself as a prime object of knowledge imbued with historicism. Turning the quip on its head about the entire history of Western philosophy being a footnote to Plato, one can say that Goethe – the widely recognized and frequently cited nineteenth-century originator of the term *Weltliteratur* in 1827 – is a footnote in the history of world philology. The historicist humanism of Goethe's pronouncement – one that is central to all modern understandings of literature as a mode of language "folded back upon the enigma of its own origin" (Foucault 1989: 300) – was preceded by centuries of lexico-philological work in Sanskrit, Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Chinese, Latin, and Greek (Schwab 1984; Mufti 2010). The shift in the nineteenth century, from Renaissance-era conceptions of the "monogenesis" of the world's tongues to philological conceptions of the unique historicity of each language embedded within its lexical, syntactic, and semantic structures revolutionized conceptions of universal history embedded in Judeo-Christian traditions of learning with Hebrew as the auratic and unifying language (Ahmed 2013). The discovery of three unique linguistic families, the Indo-European, the Afro-Asiatic, and the Altaic, beginning with the monumental labors of Sir William Jones (1746–94), and his "discovery" of Sanskrit while serving as the head of the supreme court of the English East India Company in Bengal, is well-documented in the annals of literary and philological history.[4] How does one braid this history with philological endeavors in the premodern era without reducing the latter to a by-product of colonial historiography and conceptions of world literature that emerged in the early nineteenth century in the wake of Goethe? This is the historiographical challenge that Sheldon Pollock, Benjamin Elman, and Ku-ming Kevin Chang address in their collaborative volume *World Philology* (2015). Their aim is to excavate "the diversity and complexity of philological phenomena" across recorded human history:

4 A recent powerful work on this is Siraj Ahmed's *Archaeology of Babel: The Colonial Foundation of the Humanities* (2017).

> Every civilization has developed ways of interpreting the texts it produces, and differences of philological practice are as instructive as the similarities. We owe our idea of textual edition, for example, to the third century BCE scholars of the Alexandrian Library. Rabbinical philology created an innovation in hermeneutics by shifting focus from how the Bible commands to what it commands. Philologists in Song China and Tokugawa Japan produced startling insights into the nature of linguistic signs. In the early modern period, new kinds of philology arose in Europe, but also among Indian, Chinese, and Japanese commentators, Persian editors, and Ottoman educationalists who began to interpret texts that had little historical precedent. They made judgements about the integrity and consistency of texts, decided how to create critical editions, and determined what it actually means to read. (Pollock, Elman, and Chang 2015: 12)[5]

Pollock, Elman, and Chang acknowledge the subsequent disintegration of philology into the new science of linguistics and the subdisciplines of national, comparative, and world literatures. Nevertheless, their excavation and intervention on behalf of world philology resonates with our contemplation of the *longue durée* of world literature. Our contemporary conjuncture is epistemologically different from the historicism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that valorized second-order observation to resolve the problem of perspectivism. This involved leaving the past categorically behind us, of affirming that the ground of knowledge was also the ground of a fundamental rupture with past life forms. The present was a narrow temporal strip, but one open to an infinite future. The topology of literary history today is marked by the disappearance of this epistemological ground. The *now* of our knowledge worlds is crowded by simultaneous *pasts* that not only are not dead but that vigorously question the narrow horizon of the present crafted in the Cartesian tradition of a subject-based philosophy and epistemology and Hegelian/neo-Hegelian modes (Gumbrecht 2008). The reanimation of world literature by its philological antecedents from both Western and non-Western cultures registers these shifts in the epistemological ground of literary history.

Bound by neither a finite and continuous periodicity nor a specific textual object, nor even any consensus about its theoretical ground, world literature poses a challenge for a literary historian of a magnitude scarcely encountered in fields such as Romanticism or postcolonialism. The conundrum for a historian of world literature is not unlike the one articulated by Nietzsche in 1869 with regard to philology:

5 These words appear in the jacket blurb of the volume.

> At the present day no clear and consistent opinion seems to be held regarding *Classical Philology*. We are conscious of this in the circles of the learned just as much as among the followers of that science itself. The cause of this lies in its many-sided character, in the lack of an abstract unity, and the inorganic aggregation of heterogeneous . . . activities which are connected with one another only by the name *"Philology."* (Nietzsche 1910: 170)

A century and a half later, one need only replace "philology" with "world literature" to register the dizzyingly heterogeneous range of scholarly articulations of it. Literary worldmaking as the travel and diffusion of forms, genres, and textual patterns (Moretti); as elliptical movement and reception of works in different regions of the globe (Damrosch); as a site of global competitiveness over literary value (Casanova); as works that gain in translation (Damrosch); as born-translated works that are haunted by or echo other literary imaginaries (Walkowitz); as bibliomigrancy and a global pact with books (Mani); as intermediate regional constellations between the nation and the globe (Thomsen); as organic aesthetic networks or *contact nebulae* (Thornber); as a phenomenological and normative apprehension of the singularity of literary textuality that resists the techno-materialist coordinates of globalization (Cheah); as an aesthetic and formalist response to globalization discourse, catastrophic global events, and digital hyperconnectivity after 1989 (Ganguly); as literature of the capitalist world-system (WReC) – there is no scarcity of such substantial and compelling accounts of contemporary approaches to world literature. The emergence of world literature as (comparative) literature in an age of globalization has, unsurprisingly, also produced contentious and skeptical accounts: world literature as a handmaiden of the forces of globalization; as a post-historical triumphal narrative of an enforced unification of the world (Kadir); as an alibi for an appropriative anglophone dominance (Mufti); as a translational scandal and an "intractable literary monoculture that travels through the world absorbing difference" (Apter 2014: 83); as conscription of the imagination to dangerously polarized worldviews, and even to an image capitalism that perpetuates in the name of an ecumenical vision what is, in fact, the US empire's particular national mythology (Brennan). While one is not in doubt about the significance of *world* as a powerful constellating force in literary studies today, an historian is confronted with the monumental task of "weighing, comparing, analysing and discriminating" among this vast array of articulations. (See Wellek 2009 on the unremitting task of the literary historian.)

An exploration of the intellectual history of this institutional field is no less challenging. A few such studies have already been undertaken, with most

accounts originating in Goethe's oft-cited ruminations on *Weltliteratur* in 1827, and radiating out to other formative influences across the nineteenth century and into our own era (Damrosch 2003; Strich [1949] 2008; Pizer 2011; Mani 2017). Figures such as Marx and Engels, Hugo Meltzl de Lomnitz, Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett, Richard Meyer, Richard Moulton, Rabindranath Tagore, Maxim Gorky, Zheng Zhenduo, Rene Etiemble, Rene Wellek, Claudio Guillen, Erich Auerbach, Ernest Curtius, Edward Said, Sarah Lawall, David Damrosch, Franco Moretti, Emily Apter, and Pascale Casanova are now *de rigueur* in such historiography (see D'Haen 2012). That an intellectual history of a modern disciplinary field should have a predictable trajectory from Europe to America, with some voices from Russia, India, and China sprinkled along the way, has now ceased to be a matter over which one hyperventilates. After all, the institutional history of modern disciplines is inextricably bound up with the history of the globalization of European intellectual and cultural capital in the era of empire, and of American hegemony since 1945.[6] At the same time, we are at a conjuncture when we cannot not reckon with the implications of such disciplinary origins in a constellation of competing historical forces.

Historical Method

The Cambridge History of World Literature offers an account of world literature that is informed by decades of excavation of the origins of modern disciplinary formations in histories of European encounters with civilizations across Asia, the Mediterranean, Latin America, and Africa. World literature in the twenty-first century, this project contends, is primed to explore genealogies of world literary formations that not only predate the rise of Europe but are also critically coextensive with it, *and* demonstrably foundational to the very conception of the modern idea of world literature. The *adab* literary tradition, or *belles-lettres*, in Arabic with its beginnings in the late Ummayad caliphal court in the eighth century and its consolidation in the early Abbasid period from 750–1256 CE is one such example. In Volume I, Chapter 3, Ahmed al-Rahim traces the influence of Middle Persian translations of Sanskrit on *adab* and follows a trail of translations until the sixteenth century of key texts from the Indo-Persianate and Arabic literary worlds into Hebrew, Greek, Latin,

6 Emily Apter addresses this issue. "Shaped by the classical genre theory, Renaissance Humanism, Hegelian historical consciousness, Goethean *Weltliteratur*, Diltheyan *Geistesgeschichte,* and the Marxist ideal of an 'International of letters,' literary history has been beset by . . . the Euro-chronological problem" (2014: 349–50).

and the European vernaculars, including German, Danish, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and English. One cannot conceive of world literature without calibrating the influence of such medieval and early modern philological endeavors, and their recovery and reconceptualization by philologists in the nineteenth century. Baidik Bhattacharya, building on insights from Aamir Mufti's work on the impact of orientalism, tracks the work of East India Company orientalists such as William Jones since the eighteenth century and that of German philologists who mined centuries of literary riches in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and Chinese across a vast swathe of Asia in the company of native scholars (Volume I). How could Goethe's idea of world literature have emerged, he asks, without these colonial philological endeavors that reached him via Fredrich Schlegel and other Weimar philologists? Simon During (Volume I) traces yet another pre-Goethean strand of this story with the history of the Warburtonians in eighteenth-century England: men of letters clustered around an Anglican clergyman, William Warburton, among whom was Thomas Percy. It was Thomas Percy's edited version of the Chinese work *Hau Kiou Choaan, or the Pleasing History* that was Goethe's first exposure to Chinese literature. Percy, Simon During notes, edited this work from a translation previously undertaken by an unnamed East India Company employee: a fact that circles back to a genealogical strand in comparative methods of colonial philology in British India.

Early modern histories of literary exchanges in the Mediterranean between Arabic, Latin, and Romance vernaculars, as seen in Karla Mallette's *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean: Toward a New Philology and a Counter-Orientalism* (2010), offer another site from which to think about comparative philological endeavors that challenge a teleology of world literature that must always begin with Goethe. The Mediterranean acquires an uncanny contemporaneity in Konstantina Zanou's chapter (Chapter 24, Volume I). This maritime framework, hitherto featuring almost exclusively in relation to medieval and early modern texts, offers Zanou a lens through which to analyze formative influences on two nineteenth-century poets – Ugo Foscolo and Dionysios Solomos. Though born on the same island of Zante in the Ionian Sea, Foscolo and Solomos eventually ended up as national poets of Italy and Greece respectively. The *longue durée* of the Mediterranean is indispensable to grasping the cultural influences that undergird the works of these poets.

The study of the "scriptworld" in Chinese (predating by millennia the European Renaissance), and the multiple loci of its influence in the modern Sinosphere is also an important thread in the historical weave (Longxi,

Chapter 14, Volume I). Scholarly work on the scriptworld was heralded by David Damrosch's research on cuneiform scripts in his work *The Buried Book: The Loss and Recovery of the Great Epic of Gilgamesh* (2006), and in Jing Tsu's *Sound and Script in Chinese Diaspora* (2010a). Damrosch's chapter inaugurating these *Cambridge History* volumes turns to late antiquity, specifically the Hellenistic Mediterranean world, as the site of the emergence of what he calls "ancient" world literature. This is where, he contends, works emerged that were not embedded in an organic local milieu but were products of movement, transmission, and cosmopolitical mixing. Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* features as an example. Composed in Carthage for a Roman audience but inspired by classical Greek and Roman predecessors like Ovid and Virgil, *Metamorphosis* embodies a "Greco-Roman-Egyptian syncretism" that can well be seen as a proto-world literary phenomenon. Another story of proto-world literature emerges in Wen-chin Ouyang's chapter on the Silk Roads of world literature (Chapter 2, Volume I). Ouyang traces the production, transmission, translation, and intertextual interpellation of a work known in English as *1001 Nights*. The conventional story of its emergence as world literature goes back no earlier than the eighteenth century with Antoine Galland's (1646–1715) translations and adaptations in French from fifteenth-century manuscripts. Ouyang draws our attention to its circulation, first in Persian, and then in Arabic and Chinese, from the tenth century to the nineteenth century across the famous Silk Road connecting East Asia and South Asia with West Asia and Southern Europe. Arabic, a major language along with Persian of the medieval republic of letters spanning this route from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, was instrumental in the globalization of *Alf Layla* by Muḥammad Ibn Isḥaq Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 995 or 998).

Such complex genealogical accounts illuminate pathways toward theories and methodologies of doing world literature that are not invariably circumscribed by the modern nation-state, an international competition for global prestige, the capitalist world system, and the European diffusionist model. This is, of course, not to disavow the forces of international competition or the rise of global markets in constellating literary worlds in our modern era. The endeavor of this *Cambridge History*, rather, is to illuminate genealogies of literary worldmaking that have not only been foundational to the very emergence of the idea of world literature in the nineteenth century, but that also continue to inflect historiographical and comparative work in the present. Recovering these genealogies and their interplay in our era need not be an "imperial" project, as Spivak (2003)

fears. It can be seen, rather, as an exercise in tracing coevalness between diverse literary cultures. Placing *Son Jara* or the *Mahabharata* beside *The Iliad* in an anthology is relatively easy. Sharing the labor of comparing these epic worlds from Africa, South Asia, and ancient Greece is quite another matter. "Rather than a division of labor in which national-literature specialists produce raw data for processing by world literature scholars," writes Alexander Beecroft, one can envision "a sharing of labor by which, say, specialists of Persian literature find useful theoretical and practical insights in the work of Sinologists, or Anglo-Saxonists from the work of specialists of Old Kannada" (Beecroft 2008: 100). Or as Michael Hill demonstrates in volume two, specialists in modern Chinese and Arabic literature may learn a lot from the work of the Chinese Azharites such as Ma Junwu, who embarked in the 1930s on a Chinese translation of Taha Husayn's *The Days* (*al-Ayyām*), a key text marking the Arab *Nahḍa* (translated as "renaissance" or "enlightenment"). Ma Junwu was keen to link the legacy of the Arab *Nahḍa* with the May Fourth movements in early twentieth-century China in ways that are significant for contemporary historians of world literature keen to track the rise of both Arabic and Chinese influences on global literary exchanges. There is a burgeoning Chinese scholarship in the field that aspires to understand the world's literary heritage from the vantage point of East Asia. In a paradigmatic intervention in the field, Jing Tsu offers a reading of world literature as a speculative mode of worlding – both ideational and material – by revisiting the legacy of another May Fourth intellectual, Zheng Zhenduo, who worked on the first world literary history in China – *Wenxue dagang* [*The Outline of Literature*] between 1924 and 1927 (Tsu 2010b).

Such scholarly maneuvers are very much of our time: a time out of joint with the past two centuries of worldmaking *and* nineteenth-century conceptions of world literature chiselled in the image of the European nation-state. Ours is a time haunted by myriad literary traditions that post-Enlightenment Europe subsumed under its own historicity, which are now clamoring to be *re-presenced* in the world republic of letters. What does it mean to recuperate a full-blown history of the literary and the philological undead within mainstream literary studies? Can we envision a future world literature, much as a group of Berlin scholars have recently done in launching a project on future philology, what they call *Zukunftsphilologie*, that aspires to "critically examine the genealogies and genetic conditions of philological practice throughout the world" (Dayeh 2016)? Or is *Weltliteratur* fated to be a "disciplinary haunt or crypt, a place to which scholarship returns to look

and wonder, to touch the [spectral] past and draw out of it some logic for the present" (Cooppan, Chapter 8, Volume I, p. 189)?

To frame this in another way, I see the primary challenge for a contemporary historian of world literature as one of braiding centuries-long histories of global literary exchange and their traces in the contemporary with a conceptual universalism, theoretical multivalence, and methodological pluralism so as to generate a sense of coevalness among diverse literary cultures as they inhabit our present. This is the aspiration that undergirds *The Cambridge History of World Literature*.

Polysystems and Polycentricism

The Cambridge History of World Literature is a collaborative enterprise originating in the idea that world literature is neither *all* literatures of the world nor merely a canonical set of globally successful literary works in a handful of world languages. Nor is it the literary analogue of capitalist globalization where all literary traditions are rendered fungible within a single market. We see world literature, rather, as an emergent field that engages seriously with the place and function of literary studies in our global era, and the historicity of global literary endeavors in eras prior to our own. Working at the crossroads of five disciplinary areas and theoretical constellations – comparative literature, English literature, area studies, postcolonial studies, and globalization studies – world literature, as envisioned in these volumes, functions across a comparative, multi-scalar, translational, and intercultural space–time continuum – a continuum that poses a challenge to a one-world and totalizing model of production in our capitalist era, however combined and uneven. To see world literature as just the literature of the world capitalist system is myopic. Prior eras generated republics of letters across vast continental swathes, as works by Sheldon Pollock on the Sanskrit cosmopolis, Ronit Ricci on the Arabic cosmopolis, Muzaffar Alam on the Persian ecumene, and Francois Waquet on the Latin republic of letters attest (Pollock 2006; Ricci 2011; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007; Waquet 2001). English, Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Hindi, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Tamil are large transregional literary-linguistic worlds today, albeit each with very different cultural capital. Bound by neither a single market nor a single world history of capitalist unification, world literature, in our view, offers a unique transversal and comparative framework for studying myriad literary worlds across history.

This *Cambridge History* pivots around multi-world models and literary systems. Each brings its respective history into play, and the challenge for the historian of world literature is to make visible the various intersections and thresholds of change, not all of which coalesce into a single historical trajectory. In other words, rather than trying to fit all literary worlds through human history within a single Euro-chronological framework culminating in a world capitalist systems model – where the non-[West] European worlds invariably appear as "peripheral" or in the "semi-periphery" – the volumes conceive of them as several polysystems within a planetary literary space. Two strategies are critical to generating such a polysystemic and multi-scalar approach to world literature. The first is the opening up of comparative literary studies beyond the French-English-German-Spanish quartet to the philologically rich worlds from the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, South and Southeast Asia, not to mention the Russo-Slavic region. The second is a serious rethinking about the world literary system itself in polycentric terms (Beecroft, Chapter 10, Volume I; al-Musawi, Chapter 37, Volume II). With regard to this, I think it is worth briefly revisiting systems theories from the 1970s, and, especially, the work of the literary theorists Claudio Guillén and Itamar Even-Zohar. Both were influenced by the work of Russian formalists and the Czech structuralists of the Bratislava School. In his monumental work *Literature as System: Toward a Theory of Literary History* (1971), Guillén recommends a "systematic knowledge and the critical and historical study of literature in general throughout the length and breadth of a world literary space" (Villanueva 2011: 111). Guillén's definition of system as more than a combination or a sum of its components foregrounds, at first, the idea of dependency of parts on the whole and their interrelationship marked by strata and hierarchy. But his overwhelming investment in a careful and close reading of texts, and the emplacement of texts in their historical contexts, offers an opening to consider literary systems – past and present – as also diachronic, polymorphic, multivalent, and multi-scalar.

Itamar Even-Zohar's theory of "Polysystems" (1990) offers an even stronger opening for a pluralized conception of literary systems. Two main propositions underpin his theory. One, the simultaneous existence of a closed net of relations and concurrently overlapping open net of relations within a purportedly single system. Two, the rejection of synchronic uniformity over dynamic transformation across space and time. The first proposition enables us, for instance, to read the philological and linguistic revolution of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century (cited as the origin of both comparative and world literatures) as both a closed net of relations involving

only internal exchanges among European languages *and* an overlapping open net of relations with Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and Chinese in full play. The second proposition allows us to formulate discrete theoretical approaches that are sensitive to the structural, cultural, and material particularities of different epochal moments in the *longue durée* of world literature. The problem of both temporality and historicity here can be addressed by attending closely to what the texts and their reception histories reveal about the value of the literary in different eras, not to mention the very idea of "literature" itself. The language worlds of Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic all have their own distinct understandings of the literature that have evolved over time. The incommensurable signification of the idea of literature in each discrete era, as also their intersections, need to be critically reckoned with, such that they are not all subsumed under the literary Greenwich meridian of Paris, as Pascale Casanova might be seen to direct in *The World Republic of Letters*.

Polysystemic and polycentric approaches offer openings for conceiving the totality of the world literary space as a diachronic enterprise that can generate comparative historical studies of different literary systems and that can help us trace crosscurrents wherever they are visible. The interplay of Latin and Persian cosmographies that generated new conceptions of the "world" in the early modern period (Ramachandran, Chapter 4, Volume I); the foundational influence of nineteenth-century Japanese translations of Russian literary works on the emergence of modern Korean literature (Cho, Chapter 30, Volume II); the engagement of postwar Hebrew poet-scholars with Russian, Chinese, and Japanese poetry mediated by German translations (Jacobs, Chapter 29, Volume II); and the juxtaposition of a thirteenth-century Persian poet, Jalal al-Din Rumi, with a contemporary Iranian poet, Simin Behbahani, caught up in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution (Ramazani, Chapter 31, Volume II) are illustrative of this polycentric approach; as is Andrea Bachner's transcultural cartography of Chinese–Latin American literary connections (Chapter 40, Volume II).

Rather than offer yet another history of the intellectual lineage of the field centering on towering individuals from Goethe to Damrosch, the two volumes of *The Cambridge History of World Literature* are organized around a set of interlocking genealogical, conceptual, cartographic, and methodological criteria that exemplify the practice and problematics of world literature as they have taken shape in our era. Analytic exemplarity rather than encyclopedic coverage is the guiding principle of this project. Needless to say,

the chapters engage with important intellectual figures, discursive thresholds, and critical insights when these have a bearing on unfolding arguments.

This *Cambridge History* offers an exposition of world literature by focusing on the following conceptual and methodological coordinates around which exemplary scholarship has crystallized in our time:

- Literary texts and traditions that have an active life beyond their origins, and that cross linguistic, national, and regional borders
- Polycentric theorizations of "world" and worldmaking
- Comparative methodologies that relativize European diffusionist models and that highlight networks and convergences across a diverse range of literary cultures
- Literatures in world languages with global reach and influence – English, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Tamil, Hindi, Persian – that exist within an ecology of local languages
- Cartographies of literary worldmaking beyond the nation, such as the oceanic, the hemispheric, the antipodean, the archipelagic, the transregional, and the multi-local
- Translation as a key analytic, and the recognition of its central role in enabling global literary exchanges across history
- Travel and transformation of literary genres
- Interpretive modes and reading practices that draw on multiple literary cultures and traditions, and that circumvent the polarization of debates around distant and close reading, surface and deep reading
- Preoccupation with scales, systems, and canons
- Modes of circulation in our digital age, and a reassessment for our time of the value of book history and technologies of production in earlier eras
- Literary texts with substantial global preoccupations and of world-scale chronotopic scope. These include literatures on global wars and humanitarian crises, on environmental catastrophes and climate change, and large-scale migrations and movements of people.

Revolving around these foci, the two volumes trace certain periods in human history when the idea of "world" resonated more than it did in others and ask why that is so. They explore prior moments of empire, global expansion, and transregional adventures, and the resonance of these with our global present. They trace the emergence of major language worlds that coexist creatively, and sometimes detrimentally, within ecologies of minor or local languages, and that, in turn, generate unique literary configurations. They strive to articulate a cultural grammar of the global through exploring

the interplay between language, translation, philology, genre, media, technology, market, politics, and ethics. While not comprehensively rejecting the "nation" as an organizing principle in literary history, many of the chapters offer insights into new cartographies – the hemispheric, the oceanic, the transregional, the antipodean, the archipelagic – that better reflect the interlaced, interactive, and networked nature of literary work today.

Literary works do not travel in a void. World literature has a vibrant material history ranging from the discovery of cuneiform tablets to the study of parchment manuscripts of ancient texts. Today, literary worldmaking is unthinkable without the circulation and reception of books through magazines, libraries, publishing houses, printers, book sellers, literary festivals, and digital repositories. The public life of world literature today can scarcely be conceived without Google Books, the Hathi Trust, the Harvard Murty Classical Library of India, the National Library of Australia's *Trove* database, Bodmer Lab's *A Digital World Literature*, and other large repositories. Literary works also have histories of migration into different media and cultural forms (Ponzanesi, Chapter 43, Volume II). Global Shakespeare, for instance, is a vibrant area of research as adaptations of Shakespeare's plays are actively performed across Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Scholarship on the publics of world literature, its myriad modes of circulation, and questions of power and access are key to understanding the public life of world literature. The attention of world literature has frequently been on macro-systems, whether of publishing or festivals or putative world readers. It is as important to think about the locatedness of readers, publishers, festivals; about the fragility and serendipity of networks; and about circulation outside publishing conglomerates (Orsini, Chapter 22, Volume I; Ram, Chapter 36, Volume II).

In what follows, I offer insights into concepts and methods that animate the two volumes of *The Cambridge History of World Literature*. The discussion ranges across genealogies of worldmaking, cartographic constellations, and transregional scales, the problematic of translation, the imprint of modernism, and the worldly weight of humanitarian and planetary crises.

World: A Discursive Genealogy

The idea of "world" has long been part of the literary consciousness of many cultures. Contemplations on the chronotope of "world" abound in literary, philological, and cultural history, but the word itself has scarcely had a settled meaning in such contemplation. It has been variously understood as cosmos, cosmogony, cosmography, and cosmopolis; as an ecumenical horizon that

universalizes the human condition; as an orientation to imaginaries beyond one's immediate space and time; as a symbol of global spiritual humanism; and even as a will to power that seeks to globally disseminate values originating in a particular tradition. The discussion that follows illustrates its semantic variability not to mention its scalar shifts. Readers might remember Walt Whitman's pantheistic panegyric in *Leaves of Grass* in which his poetic self is envisioned as the embodiment of the cosmos, as "an acme of things accomplish'd and an encloser of things to come." Who can forget his celebrated lines about "containing multitudes" and releasing his "barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world" (Whitman 1971: 75)? In Whitman's poem, the world is synonymous with the idea of cosmogony: one that simultaneously contemplates the origins of the universe and the palpability of sentient life. Both are recast in the poet's protean self even as he celebrates his existence in mid-nineteenth-century Manhattan as the acme of evolved human habitation. The world here ranges in a scale from the singular poetic self and the enchanted geography of Manhattan to the cosmos of all sentient creatures.

A millennium earlier, and displaying a somewhat different mode of cosmogenic contemplation, a tenth-century Sanskrit poet and literary theorist, Rajashekara, wrote a treatise on literary languages in South Asia entitled *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* (*A Discourse on Poetics*). In response to questions about the origin of literature, or *kavya* as it was understood in Sanskrit, he extrapolated from the *Rigvedic* allegory about the origin of the world in the Primal Being (*Purusha*) and theorized the origin of the Primal Being of Literature (*Kāvyapuruṣa*) as being simultaneous with the origin of the world itself. Secular temporalities of the origin of the literary, those that code histories of speech patterns, scripts, genres, language groups, and grammars, scarcely find a place in this text. Instead, we encounter a cosmogenic conception that is simultaneously anthropomorphic in its figuration. The mouth of this primal literary being is Sanskrit, his arms Prakrit, his groin Apabrahmsa, and his feet Paishachi. The hierarchy of languages is clearly delineated with the godly (Sanskrit) placed well above the finely graded vernaculars. Secularizing his interpretation, the noted Sanskrit scholar Sheldon Pollock observes that "the practice of literary culture presented here is without question a universal one: while the universe it contains may be finite, it is also final, so to speak, for no other exists outside it" (Pollock 2006: 203). Literature in such a conception contains the whole world even as the world contains it. Each constitutes the other's limit. The anthropogenic form (*Kāvyapuruṣa*) allegorizes the containment of both. Yet another theological

conception of "world" can be seen in the Hebrew term *'olam* and the Yiddish *oylem*. Both have philological roots in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish eschatology. Rémi Brague, in Barbara Cassin's *The Dictionary of Untranslatables*, offers a reading of *'olam* across various temporalities in the Hebrew Bible: as past and future; as eternity; as time after death preceding the messianic age; as a world to come (Cassin 2014). The idea of space enters *'olam* in later Rabbinic literature with notions of near and distant, concealed and open. The term undergoes another shift in the Yiddish *olyem* to connote a multifaceted space–time continuum. Adriana Jacobs (Chapter 29, Volume II) traces the reappearance of both *'olam* and *oylem* in conceptions of world literature (*sifrut 'olam*) that ramify with its theological roots.

Turning to late medieval and early modern conceptions of "world," Ayesha Ramachandran (Chapter 4, Volume I) offers a comparative history of Renaissance Europe and Mughal South Asia through the lens of what she calls "cartographic *poesis*" – a mode of worldmaking from 1450 to 1700 that fuses textual and imagistic ideas of *world* in the era of European voyages of discovery and of cartographic revolution. This was the era in which new ideas of world and world order were emerging alongside radical philosophical and epistemic shifts, and the increasing secularization of life-worlds. In a caveat published elsewhere, Ramachandran notes that "to speak of early modern cartography or 'cartographic representation' is . . . anachronistic," for, "the word 'cartography' is a nineteenth-century invention and was never used in the seventeenth century" (Ramachandran 2012: 23). The prevalent term was *cosmography* – a genre that represented the totality of the cosmos, and that "encompassed both terrestrial and celestial spheres, and initiated an immense project of collection and organization both visual and textual" (23). Textuality was an integral aspect of cosmographical projects, and these grew out of medieval encyclopaedias and compendiums such as the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville. Ramachandran's analysis traces the imprint of the medieval-era theological framework of cosmography on early modern cartographic practices by juxtaposing two visual objects. The first is a miniature painting from seventeenth-century India that is an allegorical representation of the Mughal emperor, Jahangir (1569–1627), embracing the Safavid emperor, Shah Abbas (1571–1629), on a tri-continental old-world map drawn in the contemporary cartographic style. The second is the famous generic hybrid of the "Fool's Cap" printed anonymously in 1590 in Antwerp. Juxtaposing a layered history of visual art and early modern cartographic/cosmographic practices across two world regions, this chapter offers a riveting comparative account of these hybrid objects that are simultaneously paintings, maps, textual

inscriptions, and allegory. In the process, it opens a pathway to a philological and literary history of the worldmaking in the early modern period, and demonstrates how particular literary strategies – speculation, scalar juxtaposition, allegory, philology, and lexical play – became integral to imagining, naming, and shaping a vision of the world across a range of media.

The cartographic *poesis* that Ramachandran delineates here resonates with another chapter, Muhsin al-Musawi's "Imaginative Geographies in the Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters" (Chapter 37, Volume II). Al-Musawi offers an account of the impact of classical Arabic Islamic philological geography on genres of imaginative geography: textual and visual inscriptions of places, often in the marginalia of major works, that combine real and fantastical places so as to generate a world-picture embedded in the history of Islam's encounter with non-Islamic worlds. These imaginative geographies were genres that circulated in the medieval Islamic republic of letters. Spread across Southern Europe, the Mediterranean, North Africa, and West Asia, with Cairo as the epicenter, this Arabic *ecumene* flourished between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries, and generated a phenomenal body of lexicons, encyclopaedias, compendiums, critical commentary, and poetic collections, all housed in well-funded libraries. The era generated an Arabo-Persian cosmopolitan republic of letters across West Asia, North Africa, the Mediterranean, Syria, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Focusing on a comparative study of medieval Arabic "imaginative geographies," al-Musawi excavates a philological trail of space-making that allegorizes modes of worldmaking that resist neo-orientalist accounts heralded by Edward Said, of cartographic partitioning and compartmentalization. Comparing the work of a tenth-century geographer, Shams al-Dīn al-Muqaddasī, and another by the fourteenth-century Venetian geographer and statesman Marino Sanudo, al-Musawi notes, "The application of imaginative geography should not be categorically conflated with medieval crusading, nor should it be confused with Eurocentric representations of Islam and its territory that have already been exposed and laid bare by Edward Said" (p. 734).

The shift from medieval and early modern cartographic imaginaries of "world" to those of the post-Enlightenment era marks the passage, as it were, the from the cosmographical to the cosmopolitical. By now Mercator projections of the world map are normative, and cartographic projects represent the mastery of Europe over the rest of the world. The conception of the literary world as a cosmopolis – one that functions in a geo-cultural realm straddling national borders – marks the origins of the idea of world literature

as a specific mode of disciplinary practice in nineteenth-century Europe. In the history of the discipline as it has evolved in the West, Goethe's 1827 conversation with Johann Peter Eckermann, which the latter published in 1836 (Eckermann 1964), is the widely acknowledged source for the first modern use of the term *world literature*, that is, world literature conceived in terms of enhanced commerce and reception of literary works across national frontiers: as a cosmopolitan enterprise. As is well known, the lexico-philological revolution in the world of letters from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century made many non-European works available in translation across the continent.[7] The German term *Weltliteratur* captured for Goethe the evolving cosmopolitical transformations of Europe in a post-Napoleonic era, as also his own exposure to Persian and Chinese works that was enabled by the newly minted disciplines of Oriental and Indological studies in Germany (Strich 1946; Pizer 2006; Mani 2017). Another frequently cited source is Marx and Engel's *The Communist Manifesto*, which in 1848, used the term in the Goethean sense of an expanded market of ideas and books, a new Literary International rising "from many national and local literatures" (Marx and Engels 1969: 98). Other well-known figures associated with the evolution of the idea in the decades since are Hugo Meltzl Lomnitz, Richard Meyer, Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett, Eric Auerbach, Claudio Guillen, and Edward Said (Auerbach 1969; Guillen 1971; Said 1983, 2003; Guillen 1993; Marno 2008; Damrosch 2011; Schmitz-Emans 2011; Villaneauva 2011).

At the turn of the century, another German philologist and comparatist, Richard Meyer (1860–1914), published two influential works, one in 1900 entitled "Die Weltliteratur und die Gegenwart" ("World Literature and the Present") and another in 1913 called *Die Weltiteratur im 20. Jahrhundert* (*World Literature in the 20th Century*). Meyer's was the first systematic attempt at a definition of world literature, and an evaluative one at that. Only literary works that significantly transcended their specific historical locations and temporally determined worldviews, that awakened a wide swathe of readers to humanity's genius, that activated the full spectrum of human emotions, and that captured the elusive magic of human flourishing and decay were deemed worthy of that name. World literature for Meyer was simultaneously a poetics, an ethics, a philosophical anthropology, and a universal treatise on human affect. An avowed vitalist and visionary, and also a Nietzschean, primarily in his anti-historicism, he categorically eschewed the progressivism

7 See Mani (2017) for a comprehensive account of how Germany became a significant node in global circulation of philological work emerging from South and Southeast Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

of Goethe as also the latter's additive vision of an expanding global literary sphere through trade, commerce, conquest, and influence. Nor was he enamored of the rising tide of German nationalism. While he never put forward a canon of great and timeless works that would constitute the world literature corpus, it would not be far-fetched to imagine his inventory of literary value translating into such an exercise, as indeed it did in many major research universities in Europe, Asia, and the Americas from the early years of the twentieth century. The Great Books courses in leading US universities throughout the twentieth century and into our own owe much to such ideas of timeless literary and civilizational value.

One would not automatically associate Eric Auerbach's anguish-prone 1952 treatise "Philology and *Weltliteratur*" with Richard Meyer's works. However, they did share an aversion toward the pathologies of Germanic nationalism. For Auerbach, as is well known, this meant exile to Istanbul with the rise of the Nazis and an urgent advocacy of a philologically oriented approach to literatures of the world, one that would not standardize or flatten the riches on offer, nor be wiped out by a nihilistic bureaucratization of human difference. Edward Said's own formulations of the idea were built on this Auerbachian linkage between literature, philology, and world history. Combining Auerbach's insights with those from Vico's *New Science* and Arabic philological traditions, Said saw the task of the critic as one of prizing open the "worldliness" of the literary text – first, by situating it as a product of its material allegiances and historical affiliations, and subsequently, through mining words philologically as repositories of human belonging through time (Said 2003).

Theo D'haen's *Routledge Concise History of World Literature* (2012) and his collaborative volume with David Damrosch and Djelal Kadir *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* (2011) offer comprehensive accounts of this critical European phase of world literature that globalized itself through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It re-emerged in the Euro-American academy in the twenty-first century in the works of David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, and Franco Moretti. Theo D'haen's chapter in volume one of this *Cambridge History* excavates a thinker in interwar Europe, Victor Klemperer, who scarcely features in the European lineage of the field. While his works are not available widely in English translation, Klemperer is best known for his diaries in which he meticulously documented the debasement of the German language under Nazism. These were subsequently published in 1947 as *Lingua Tertii Imperii: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (The Language of the Third Reich). D'haen examines Klemperer's untranslated French and

German tracts on world literature, and makes a case for a specific European genealogy of world literature conceived as a universal ethical-aesthetic complex that emerged in the era of Romanticism. The universality of world literature as a global civilizational force is here not reduced to the history of European national literatures. Rather, Klemperer's writings advocate holding on to Europe's unique contribution to world literature's aesthetic universality in the face of the terror of the interwar years and the rise of Nazism.

Even as it laid the foundations of modern literary studies and affirmed modes of apprehending world literature as a universal good, the Euro-cosmopolitical ideal continues to be punctuated by philological and philosophical ideas of "world" that add surprisingly idiosyncratic, illuminating, and untimely insights into this modern historiographical map of the field. These are captured in chapters by Simon During and Rosinka Chaudhuri in volume one. Simon During explores an idea of world literature that emerged among a group of eighteenth-century Anglican clergymen called the Warburtonians. Perceived as *genre* rather than as a canon of circulating texts or a mode of literary exchange, world literature for the Warburtonians denoted writing that is written for and to the world in general, rather than for or to any particular community or readership. Traces of this conception, he argues, can be found in Franz Kafka. Kafka's works can be interpreted as a mode of literature that neither emerges from any particular literary/rhetorical lineage or tradition nor is directed toward any knowable community or readership, but rather to and of the world itself. Another version of this conception of "world," not as genre but as an aesthetic-spiritual entity unyoked from the particularities of space and time, is to be found in Rabindranath Tagore's tract on world literature *Viśvasāhitya* (1907), the subject of Chapter 13 (Volume I) by Rosinka Chaudhuri. In 1907, Tagore was invited by the National Council of Education in Calcutta to talk about comparative literature. The Council was set up to resist efforts by the British to legislate for the widespread introduction of English education in the three presidencies of Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, and also to protest against the enforced division of Bengal into East and West by the Viceroy Lord Curzon in 1905. Crafting his protest against both these measures in tellingly unromanticized metaphors of earth, land, and linguistic belonging, Tagore asserts that he wants to talk about world literature (*Viśvasāhitya*) and not comparative literature (*Tulanatmak Sahitya*): "I have been called upon to discuss a subject to which you have given the English name of Comparative Literature. Let me call it World-Literature in Bengali." Comparative literature for him perpetuates a divide between languages and regions. He appears to have little patience with its discriminating and

differentiating methodologies. The idea of "world literature" on the other hand embodies for him a universal continuum, one that captures a global spiritual humanism. It also captures the essence of the term *sahitya* in its etymological sense of "togetherness" and "union." More significantly, *Viśvasāhitya* is resolutely set against what he calls *deś-kāl-pātra* (place-time-person). It is an embodiment of the "world" envisioned as *viśvamānab* (universal human) and is *behisabi* (beyond calculation, in excess).

Here we see a prefiguration – albeit in a different philological register – of contemporary debates about the agonistic relationship between worldmaking and globalization. I have analyzed this in some detail in my book *This Thing Called the World*, where I offer a conception of "world" in literary studies that can be read, not as synonymous with the global (the domain of speculation, calculability, and fungibility), but as its aesthetic and ethical substratum that is *behisabi* (incalculable) in Tagore's sense. The world, I suggest, exists both as ground and as horizon, as both inside and outside the empirical reality of the global (Ganguly 2016: 77–80). The ravages of our era urge an investment in the aesthetic and ethical capacity of literature, a kind of relationality that is informed, but not overdetermined, by the economic and political structures of globalization. Pheng Cheah's *What Is a World?* (2016) is another powerful foray into the philosophical underpinning of worldmaking in German thought and continental philosophy, one that injects a much-needed temporal dimension and a normative thrust in the largely space-dominated and materialist accounts of globalization. Literatures from the postcolonial South are seen by Cheah as the most generative forces of worldmaking today; they herald the opening of worlds that imagine ways of dwelling irreducible to the inhumanity of the capitalist world-system.

In some sense, these rich accretions bring us full circle to medieval and early modern conceptions of the idea of "world" as cartographic *poesis*, one that braids multiple temporalities, worldviews, theological schema, aesthetic traditions, and allegorical comparisons. Worldmaking in its richest sense is *poesis* (Hayot, Chapter 9, Volume I; Ramazani, Chapter 31, Volume II). It is also, in its contemporary iteration, a cartographic endeavor that reconfigures scales of literary comparativism beyond the nation. Maps are contentious forms, and the pitfalls of cartographic thinking are many. Nevertheless, literary mapmaking can be nomadic and serendipitous; a mode of experimental reading revealing unexpected twists and turns.[8] It can bring noncontiguous and

8 The idea of map-making as "nomadic" is indebted to Deleuze and Guattari's (1983) essay on Kafka.

incommensurable topographies into startlingly new configurations. The section that follows considers how emerging cartographies and modes of transregional worlding are remaking world literature in our time.

Cartographic Constellation and Transregional Worlding

The question of spatial scale in world literature is as urgent as questions of temporality and historicity. While there is a consensus about the unviability of an inexhaustibly additive model based on existing national and regional classifications, what constitutes viable units of analysis in world literature has exercised many scholars in recent years. How do we conceive of median scales larger than the nation but smaller than the globe that push against notions of a freewheeling globality? What about multilingual nations whose literary worlds cross borders in ways that defy the classic polarization between the local and the global? Further, who can ignore the proliferation of linguistic -phones in our era that are not geographically contiguous – anglophone, francophone, sinophone, and lusophone? A few years ago, Alexander Beecroft offered an ecological model of scales (a new iteration appears in Volume I) that focused on environments within which literatures emerge. His sixfold scheme scales up from the *epichoric* (extremely local oral expressive forms), to the *panchoric* (rise of written literature within a circumscribed zone), the *cosmopolitan* (rise of universal languages with a transregional sway, such as Sanskrit, Greek Latin, Persian), the *vernacular* (proliferating tongues with roots in one or other cosmopolitan language spoken and practiced in various parts of the world), the *national* (homology between nation, language, people; tied to the rise of Europe as a global power), and the *global* (a phase yet to actualize itself). While this *Cambridge History* does not offer a cognate typology of scale, nor does it concur that the final phase of the "global" has yet to arrive, Beecroft's insights into the dynamic entanglement of cosmopolitan and vernacular languages, comparative ecologies of contact and transmission that bypass familiar territorial constraints, and extended histories of literary worldmaking not beholden to a Eurochronology, are invaluable in conceiving the scalar scope and cartographic models of world literature in our time.

The call for critical regionalisms (Bush 2017) and intermediate regional constellations (Thomsen 2008) has gone hand in hand with theoretical work on the hemispheric, the antipodean, the oceanic, the archipelagic, and the multilingual-local as median frames. Representations of the antipodes as an

upside-down view of the world are legion in cartographic and cultural histories from the early modern era. What might cartographic *poesis* look like from the antipodes? From Australia and the South Pacific in particular? Paul Giles (Chapter 25, Volume I) offers some insights into an antipodean perspective's creative potential for canonical figures such as Mark Twain and Herman Melville. It also complicates the history of the emergence of the global south as a cartographic vantage point in the present, as also the idea of planetarity as a counterpoint to the globe and the world. Questions about scale appear quite sobering when posed many thousands of miles away from "down under," as Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific are colloquially known.

Oceanic literary approaches, unmoored from familiar terrestrial bearings, can be no less disorienting. They reveal startling relationalities between disjunctive literary worlds across vast regions. Much before concepts such as "networks," "flows," and "liquid capitalism" came to define the spatial logics of contemporary globalization, oceanic networks across the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, the Pacific, and the Atlantic were seen as integral to the history of premodern cultures, of European imperialism, and of capitalist modernity. The rise of oceanic literary studies toward the end the twentieth century has paralleled the rise of world literature, and each mirrors the other's engagement with crosscutting temporal and spatial experimentation that decenters familiar national and transnational histories based on the Westphalian model (Ganguly, Chapter 23, Volume I). Seas, bays, littorals, islands, and archipelagoes configure the histories of literary production, and transmission in startlingly new ways, as we saw earlier with Zanou's work on the Mediterranean. Atlantic-based literary histories of Britain and France are now inconceivable without the transatlantic Middle Passage, as also are the Caribbean and American literatures. The Indian Ocean likewise constellates literary formations across littoral East Africa, West Asia, South Asia, and China. An archipelagic approach to Scandinavia offers yet another model of literary worldmaking across Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and Denmark, and their unexpected global trajectories of cultural exchange. Scandinavia's history of contact with Western Europe across the North Sea, as also its particular location in a non-hegemonic, culturally rich, politically progressive, and ecologically awakened zone, has offered it a unique vantage point in the field of world literature. The contribution of scholars from the region such as Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Stefan Helgesson, Soren Frank, and Dan Ringgaard, to name only a few, has added admirable heft to the field in ways that belie Scandinavia's relatively modest presence, geopolitically speaking,

on the world stage. Dan Ringgaard (Chapter 26, Volume I) offers one such off-center counter-map of global thinking through an archipelagic and planetary reading of a single epic poem, *Östersjöar*, by Tomas Tranströmer. Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (Volume II), in turn, reflects on the posthuman and nonhuman horizon of world literature reflected in an array of texts that contemplate alternate futures, in turns apocalyptic and utopian, for human kind: a posthumous form of writing about the ends of the world from the planet's northernmost zone.

Median geographical entities such as Scandinavia, Latin America, Central Europe, and East Asia have long connected multilingual literary worlds along transregional vectors. Each has had its own unique traction with other zones in the world literary system. Latin America's Hispanic and Lusophone histories not only enfold traces of the continent's surviving indigenous cultures, but also those of literary worlds generated by imperial Spain and Portugal across Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, not to mention Spain's own Moorish antecedents. The looming presence of North America is yet another vector across which one witnesses simultaneous engagement and disavowal. The "push and pull of competing lineages" play out in the contemporary sphere of culture in astonishing displays of transcultural and creolized arts forms frequently bordering on the baroque (Sommer, Chapter 15, Volume I). Another such rich transregion, East Asia, straddles the civilizational worlds of China and Japan, whose cultural, religious, and linguistic influences across millennia have shaped a vast continental space including modern Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand (Longxi, Chapter 14, Volume I). The history of literary exchanges in this vast Sinosphere merits a volume all on its own, and scholars such as Karen Thornber, Shu Mei Shih, Lydia Liu, Zhang Longxi, and Jing Tsu have contributed rich translational and transcultural models of work in recent years. Thornber's idea of *contact nebulae* – intra-Asian aesthetic networks emerging organically from particular histories of the region – serves as a template for Daniel Kim's chapter on Korean literature during the Cold War (Chapter 19, Volume I). The latter's resonance with, and disjunction from, the cultural history of the Vietnam War, and literary work on global wars after 1989, is the substance of Kim's analysis of the emergence of a corpus of global Korean novels. The historical trope of the end of the Cold War and the global unification of the world under capitalism appears unsustainable when one examines this corpus that includes writers from North Korea. The influence of translations of Russian literature (into Japanese and Chinese) has been foundational to the formation of a national Korean literature (Cho, Chapter 30, Volume II), and any attempt

to think about the history of world literature through the geopolitical lens of the defeat of communism and the unification of the world under US hegemony has to seriously reckon with such alternative histories of world formation.

The global remaking of translocal languages such as Tamil (with its origins in southern India), the inflection of Francophonie from Indo-China and the Maghreb, a calibration of the oversize influence of Irish modernism in world literary histories, and the simultaneous minimization of African literatures as a regional supplement are other examples of work in these volumes that experiment with transregional models and scalar variations. Tamil, a classical Dravidian language going back to antiquity, and also the only living classical language in the world, is the subject of Chapter 21 by Sascha Ebeling (Volume I). Ebeling traces the emergence of Tamil as a global linguistic resource for literary production across South and Southeast Asia, Northern and Western Europe, Canada, and Australia. The contemporary emergence of "global Tamil" (*ulakattamiḻ*) literatures can be attributed to a century-long history of Indian, Sri Lankan, and Malaysian diaspora. While sharing approximately the same number of speakers globally – 68 million for Tamil, and 67 million for French – the cultural capital of French and the francophone world far surpasses that of Tamil ("Top 30 Languages of the World," n.d.). France's position in the global republic of letters has been so widely and comprehensively celebrated in Euro-American academia that it makes little sense to recount its glory in these pages. Its intersection with cultures of Southeast Asia during and after France's imperial rule over Indo-China is, perhaps, not as well traversed as its entanglement with Africa and the Caribbean. This is the substance of Leslie Barnes's chapter that reads little-known novels such as D'Esme's *Les Dieux rouges* against the grain of standard accounts in postcolonial and world literature that relegate such works to the genre of the colonial-exotic. Her analysis of D'Esme's novel makes a temporal leap into deep time with the discovery of a prehistoric crevice from Gondawana in an Indo-Chinese forest that unsettles the colonial-capitalist logic of accumulation and expropriation (Chapter 20, Volume I); a disjunction in the capitalist flow that Barnes calls "continental drift." Lateral connections across continents between two francophone nations – Vietnam and Algeria – also appear in Anne-Marie McManus's account of the translational worlds of avant-garde journals from the Maghreb and Levant in the 1960s (Volume II). Through the writings of the Algerian writer Kateb Yacine, a leading figure of the independence generation of the 1960s and 1970s, McManus traces the influence of Vietnamese theatrical performances on Algerian dialectal literatures.

Produced in the shadow of the Vietnam War, but also encapsulating centuries of Vietnamese resistance against Chinese, French, and American incursions, Yacine's play *L'homme aux sandales de caoutchouc* (1970) is described as a "vast fresco on the Vietnamese resistance". Francophonie or the French republic of letters, needless to say, is much enriched by such endeavors.

I round out my exposition on cartographic scale and transregional worlding by turning to chapters by Buescu and Orsini (Chapters 16 and 22, Volume I). Helena Carvalhão Buescu's account of a six-volume project in world Portuguese literatures, "Literatura-Mundo: Perspectivas em Portuguêse," takes stock of transcontinental routes along which Portuguese literatures have emerged in the past century. Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Goa, Malacca, and Macau all constitute nodes in this lusophone network. The cartographic comparativism that Buescu proposes is informed by a granular global perspective, one that attends carefully to linguistic and generic variations in each region; to their unique historical contexts of production, translation, and transmission; to the emplacement of Portugal in a network of religious, cultural, and political transformation in Europe from the early modern era; and to a hermeneutic informed by estranged, risky, and dissonant readings that highlight an awareness of displacement, of being elsewhere, not at home. Buescu's project is an exemplar of transregional worlding, attuned to radiating histories of literary travel in a language that in turn is transformed by its global cultural accruals.

To turn from the monolingual heteroglossia of a transregional sphere to conceptions of the "multilingual local" within a subcontinental space is to experience another kind of estrangement. South Asia, and especially India, is a prime example of a literary world that can never be simply national or simply monolingual (Orsini, Chapter 22, Volume I). In her chapter Orsini excavates an array of media, genres, expressive modes (oral and performative), cultural networks, and publishing ventures within which South Asia's multilingual histories unfold, often along unexpected and untrammeled circuits. Orsini's exposition reveals a multiverse of influences beyond English that have shaped literary worlds in the region: Persian, Turkish, Russian, Chinese, French, and Hispanic. In many ways, India can be seen as a microcosm of the worldwide ferment in literary studies today. At once the philological home of two classical languages, Sanskrit and Tamil; a cultural home of Persian from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries; and the national home of twenty-two official vernacular languages with distinct literary traditions going back to the early years of the second millennium CE,

India is also a prime site of the elevation of English to a world language, due to its British colonial history, the staggering array of globally renowned writers in the language, and a thriving market for English-language books. Globally, South Asian literature in English (Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi) is the most visible face of this vast, multilingual subcontinent. Postcolonial literature and theory are unthinkable without the corpus of works from South Asia, as is the revival of philological endeavors in our time that trouble the Eurochronology of comparative and world literature, and of modern literary studies in general. India's state-supported literary academy, the Sahitya Akademi, has been at the forefront of translational projects in the country, both in English and in the twenty-two official languages of the nation. Recent interventions by the Hindu nationalist state to reshape India's cultural identity along its Sanskritic lineage to the exclusion of its Persian and Mughal past have major implications for how certain literary traditions are supported or disenfranchised in the years to come. Literary lineages are rarely forged in a political vacuum, and cultural myth-making backed by a technologically advanced militaristic state can determine what kinds of literature circulate in the public sphere (Mani, Chapter 42, Volume II). The multilingualism of India and its fraught relationship with not only a globally dominant English but also the exclusionary politics of the authoritarian Hindu nationalist state offer fertile ground for the exploration of questions of translation, translatability, and untranslatables that reverberate in discussions about the global thrust of world literature. Concerns about the compression of world literary riches into a handful of world languages, and especially English, are inextricable from the politics and problematics of translation (Arac 2002); so is the problem of keeping literary ecosystems alive in conditions of political precarity. Translations, as we shall see below, are often a lifeline under such conditions.

World Literature and Translation

Translation is at the heart of world literary studies. It is a truism that there can be no literary travel or comparison without the act of translation. World literature is literature that gains in translation, as David Damrosch unequivocally states in his manifesto (2003). A recent influential pushback by Emily Apter (2013) highlights the role of "untranslatables" in defeating any attempt to think of world literature as a viable field. Apter's polemic is directed against what she calls the "big tent," "entrepreneurial," and "bulimic" approach of world literature that ignores the problem of untranslatability. She defines the

untranslatable as "an incorruptible or intransigent nub of meaning that triggers endless translating in response to its singularity" (Apter 2013: 235). Notwithstanding the dazzling range of theoretical sources explored in *Against World Literature*, a closer reading of the work reveals an investment in Euro-romanticist and modernist ideas about the authenticity and inviolability of an original language – ideas whose genealogical roots can be traced to theological debates about biblical hermeneutics that have since been secularized by philosophers such as Benjamin, Derrida, and Badiou. This generates ideas of translation as deformation, contamination, or even corruption; ideas not shared widely in other literary cultures, but foundational to European comparative literature. Lawrence Venuti's observation is quite pertinent here: "It is one thing to recognize that translation constantly confronts incommensurability, but another, very different thing to call the resulting transformation a 'deformation'" (2016: 198). Ironically, Apter herself recommended the marriage of translation theory and *Weltliteratur* in a previous book, *The Translation Zone* (2006). Apter's is, of course, not the only skeptical voice. Erosion of linguistic and cultural particularities, neglect of works not amenable to translation or circulation in global markets, diminishment of the aura of the original text, base standardization, and loss of multilingual competence have all been variously cited as reasons why translated works ought not to feature as objects of literary study. The comparison of a few English translations of *The Epic of Son-Jara*, set in the region around western Sudan in the thirteenth century, and a "living" musical and dramaturgical form in contemporary Africa reveals the problem of mistranslation of the various colloquial and performative idioms of this epic poem (Esonwanne, Chapter 17, Volume I). Oral traditions, in translation or otherwise, are a significant omission in discussions of world literature, one that these volumes too do not address in any detail (Levine 2013).

While acknowledging these legitimate concerns, this *Cambridge History* also signals the historic role of translation in world literary studies. Scholarly traditions across history have felt the influence of other traditions mainly through acts of translation. The European Renaissance is unthinkable without the discovery of medieval-era Arabic translations of Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. As is the emergence of modern comparative and world literatures without the massive translation enterprises of colonial era orientalists like William Jones, Fredrick Schlegel, and Wilhelm von Humboldt. Historically speaking, especially in the context of precolonial Persian or Sanskrit literatures, translations were not often considered foundational to comparative literary practice. This was due to the prevalence of a multilingual education system,

modes of acquisition through performance, recitation, and expository practices, and the presence of the multiple languages in the spoken world. Translations from Sanskrit to Persian, and vice versa, nevertheless, proliferated across West Asia and South Asia (see, for instance, Nair 2014). The translational turn at the end of the twentieth century in tandem with the rise of world literature has been welcomed by scholars such as Susan Bassnett and Lawrence Venuti (Bassnett 2014: 234–45; Venuti 2016: 198). A practice that has been foundational to the very emergence of global reading public spheres, and of literature as a scholarly discipline, translation was, for years, devalued as secondary, derivative, and deforming due to the sanctification of mastery in the original tongue in the field of comparative literature. The conception of world literature as a network of intersecting flows has led to a reevaluation of the stature of translation as a foundational practice in the history of literary dissemination.

Our endorsement in these volumes of the value of translation is based not in a willful gesture of disregard for the limits of translational practice but on the strength of our contributors' engagement with many linguistic worlds even as they evaluate the role of translation in their comparative projects. Such engagements are evidence that translational practices in world literature do generate intricate interlingual and transcultural work, and are not inevitably agents of a flattening fungibility or monocultural capture. Jahan Ramazani's exploration of translational complexities in lyric poetry – the genre typically seen as most resistant to translation – is one such revelatory chapter (Chapter 31, Volume II). Exploring lyrics in Persian, German, Latin, French, and code-switching English, Ramazani offers a corrective to the tedious polarization between translation and untranslatability. A meticulous, case-by-case approach informs his study, as he carefully parses the work of translation (or code-switching) in each poem in terms of how verbal textures, metaphors, rhymes, rhythms, assonances, alliterations, word play, tonal shifts, and phonemic units either carry over or do not. Reading the works of a "world" poet such as Rumi – translations of whose Persian *oeuvre* reached Goethe – both in the original and in its various translations, Ramazani discusses the *melopoeic* (relating to music or melody) losses that ensue in English as against translations into Urdu, Arabic, or Spanish with cognate vowel structures. Among the many insightful conclusions Ramazani draws about the poetic interplay of translation, two are particularly significant. First, we become ever more aware of the unique features of a language when we cross over to another; that the act of translation actually animates the singularity of languages. This gives short shrift to the argument that the luminous singularity of a language resides in itself and

is invariably deformed by translation. The second insight is that world literature urgently needs a "post-Eurocentric" theory of comparative poetics attuned to a global multilingualism.

The critical role of translation is visible in two other chapters in Volume II that focus on the political urgency of literary connections across multilingual contexts. These are Anne Marie McManus's account (Chapter 28) of the rise of avant-garde literary journals and their translational work in Arabic and French across the Maghreb and Levant in the 1960s, also the era of decolonial euphoria and political ferment in the two regions; and Michael Hill's history (Chapter 27) of the translational enterprise of Chinese Azharites (Chinese scholars studying at Al-Azhar University in Egypt) in the early years of the twentieth century. Hill's work features elsewhere in this introduction as a remarkable exercise in translational comparativism between Chinese and Arabic in an important political juncture for both cultural arenas. McManus's chapter brings alive a world of fervent translational activity along the Maghreb–Levant axis in the 1960s, with Beirut as the epicenter. Two charismatic figures, whose paths only ever crossed in the pages of Beirut-based journals, feature in this story. One such figure is Abdellatif Laâbi, a Moroccan poet, critic, and translator, who edited the Marxist-Leninist avant-garde journals *Souffles-Anfas* (1966–71) until his imprisonment by the repressive state under the monarch Hassan II. The second personage is Sargon Boulus, a prominent and prolific Iraqi poet and translator associated with the 60s generation (*jil al-sitinat*), who dedicated his life to translating political tracts and poetic works from around the world into Arabic. Boulus's translational projects are inspired by his vision of Arabic as an oceanic language irreducible to the pieties of religious conservatism. Laâbi, in turn, was propelled by the politico-cultural upheavals of the 1960s to render into Maghrebi French an Arabic poetics from the Levant inspired by pre-Islamic and Palestinian voices, as also voices of popular artists across the arc from Morocco and Egypt to Lebanon and Iraq. Both spearheaded projects of cultural decolonization through their editorial and translational work. Both were deeply committed to generating a comparative poetics that captured the unique cultural entanglements across the Maghreb–Levant axis. The act of translation was indispensable to both.

A final story about the range of translational endeavors in world literature, this time from the perspective of Hebrew poetry. The sacred language in Judeo-Christian civilization and the official language of Israel, Hebrew's auratic stature has undergone a transformation in the modern era. Focusing on a fascinating case study from the translational *oeuvre* of

Hebrew poetics in the twentieth century, Adriana Jacobs (Chapter 29, Volume II) brings into view the figure of the "forger" or the second-hand translator, one who translates not from the original but from prior translations that are themselves recreations and not faithful translations. In many instances, the original is untraceable, having undergone reinvention in many languages. Such a translator figure is the poet Leah Goldberg (1911–71). Her translations/transcreations of world poetry offer an insight into the fraught cultural politics of European Jews caught up in the catastrophic vortex of the 1930s and the creation of Israel in 1948. Israel's grim monolingual language policy has stripped Hebrew of its cultural accretions from Russian, but also, notedly, from Mizrachi and Sephardic languages such as Spanish and Arabic. Goldberg's collection of world poetry, entitled *Kolot rechokim u-krovim* (*Voices Far and Near*), captures not only worlds lost to Jews during the traumatic twentieth century but also a poetic universe from East Asia that appeared in an early twentieth-century German translational practice called *Nachdichtungen* – transcreation and not faithful translations of poetic works from Japan and China. Goldberg was a student of German orientalism in the 1930s at the University of Bonn. She loved the poetry of the renowned eighth-century Tang Dynasty poet Du Fu. She also had many conversations with her Japanese teacher, Matsumoto Tokumei, about the famous frog haiku of Matsuo Bashō, the celebrated practitioner of this most compressed of poetic forms in seventeenth-century Japan. Her translational poetic endeavor forges imaginary cultural maps of Jewish and Hebrew worlds irrevocably lost in the horrors of Nazism and Israel's monocultural zeal. Translational worldmaking is a precarious *poesis*.

Modernism's Afterlife and Planetary Conjunctures

The contemporary has been called the moving ratio of modernity (Rabinow 2008). Modernity is fixated on the heroism of the *now* (in Foucault's famous formulation), that is, in the valorization of the new over the old, the present over the past, the novel over the epic, capitalist life forms over pre-capitalist ones. The contemporary, on the other hand, is a structure of temporality that conceives of modernity itself as already becoming historical. The contemporary illuminates the present by bringing into view its own hetero-temporal ruptures and by remediating traces of past life forms. The contemporary, seen in light of our planetary fate, can also be conceived in terms of a catastrophic future that is already unraveling in our present. What are the implications of thinking world literature in these temporal modes that

eschew a progressivist vision of human futures while being attuned to the historicity of life-worlds from the past?

I raise these issues because world literature in its many iterations has been uniquely attuned to its *zeitgeist*. I also raise them out of a sense of quandary at the stubborn persistence of modernist frameworks in contemporary iterations of the field, especially those derived from Immanuel Wallerstein's theory of the capitalist world system, and of literary modernism. As we noted earlier, foundational interventions in the field by Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanova are based on the world-systems model. Modernism appears to be *ur*-aesthetic in Casanova's apprehension of literary value. Many literary worlds simply vanish from the modernist optic or are contorted beyond recognition. At least, Casanova and, to some extent, Moretti insist on the distinct ontologies of their systemic approaches that are irreducible to the ontic or material ground of the capitalist world system. A recent energetic iteration found in the work of the Warwick Research Collective (WreC) eschews this distinction and categorically claims that "world literature is the *literature of the capitalist world system*" (WreC 2015: 15). Didn't Fredric Jameson say that modernity was a space–time *sensorium* corresponding to capitalist modernization?[9] How can millennia-long of histories of world literature be reduced to the *sensorium* of the past 200 years without committing philological violence? Little wonder, then, that WreC's literary *oeuvre* is limited to the novel form and various iterations of realism found in the "peripheries and (semi-) peripheries" of the Euro-American canon. This is neither to disavow the importance of the novel and its modern foundations in the history of capitalism nor to dismiss the monumental impact of capitalism on our world (how can one!), but to highlight a few dead ends of world-systems theory and doctrinaire Marxist approaches in contemplating our world literary heritage.

Many generative studies tracing transformations of the novel across literary traditions have greatly enriched the field. Chapters by Neil Ten Kortenaar, Hamish Dalley, and Sonali Thakkar in these volumes highlight the transformative potential of the novel across Nigeria, Kenya, Algeria, Ivory Coast, Mauritius, India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Kortenaar's chapter analyzes a corpus of African novels through a prism that complicates both European diffusionist models and ethnonationalist perspectives focusing on indigenous continuity. Works by Chinua Achebe, Buchi Emecheta, Sindwe Magona, Alan Paton, Ahmadou

9 Fredric Jameson also refers to the "intellectual regressions" of approaches that attempt to imagine other temporalities of the modern. See Jameson (2002: 3) for his critique of Lyotard.

Kourouma, Ben Okri, and Labou Tansi feature in the chapter along with a range of novels from Europe and America to offer a rich comparative view of the novel's global provenance (Chapter 32, Volume II). Dalley traces the resurgence of realism in a corpus of contemporary world novels and accounts for this in terms of the urgency of bearing witness to the world's ravages. As he writes, "Narrating the world-system's emergence as a process of genocidal frontier-expansion encodes modernity as an era of trauma" (Chapter 33, Volume II, p. 645). Realism's traction with extradiegetic factual modes in the works of Michael Ondaatje, Margaret Atwood, Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Chris Abani, Rohan Wilson, Witi Ihimaera, and Flanagan signals the novel's renewed role as an epistemic and evidentiary narrative mode, a record-keeping and reporting function going back to its eighteenth-century origins in genres of fact-making. This is a contemporary reconstruction of realism shot through with traumatic histories of capitalist worldmaking. A third chapter on the novel's worldmaking capacity by Sonali Thakkar (Chapter 7, Volume I), brings to the fore works that capture the intertwined histories of the Holocaust and Afro-Asian postcolonialisms after 1945. These are Caryl Phillips's *The Nature of Blood* (1997), Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988), Nathacha Appanah's *Le dernier frère* (*The Last Brother*, 2007), and Boualem Sansal's *Le Village de l'Allemand ou Le journal des frères Schiller* (2008). To bring this corpus together is not only to reanimate the connection between a genocidal imperialism in the colonies and the Nazi Holocaust – a link already established by Hannah Arendt, Aimé Césaire, and many others – but also to trace contrapuntal patterns that connect disparate geographies, histories, and memories of these horrors across a global archive of the contemporary.

Given its popularity, portability, and translatability as a global genre, the novel has typically dominated discussions of contemporary world literature. Scholars of world literature have, nevertheless, also explored the evolution of other genres, and technologies of writing in print and digital media. The chapters by Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey on the graphic novel (Chapter 34, Volume II), and by Melek Ortabasi on children's literature feature as examples of these (Chapter 35, Volume II). Poetic forms feature in many other chapters, as we have seen, as do little-discussed genres such as journals, literary magazines, and even "physiologies" of the urban everyday whose circulation and adaptation Harsha Ram traces across a Franco-Russian circuit via St. Petersburgh, Paris, and Tiflis (Chapter 36, Volume II).

The question of literary modernism is far more complex. Significant scholarship in recent years has historicized modernism as a global movement

and a major force of intermedial worlding in the arts (see Murphet 2009; Levenson 2011; Hayot, 2012; Stanford Friedman 2015; Okeke-Agulu 2015; Saint-Amour 2015; Vadde 2018). The rise of photography, radio, the telegraph, and cinema revolutionized media ecologies within which literatures emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. Technological accelerations of our era, including the dizzying spurts of multimedial revolutions we are living through, would be hard to conceptualize without the foundational work of modernism. Modernism is contemporary globalism's indispensable pre-history, as Julian Murphet recounts in Chapter 6 of Volume I. Its impact was felt worldwide: in Europe, America, and Latin America, of course, but also in Russia, Turkey, India, and Japan. The "world" of lyric poetry that Eric Hayot explores through his parsing of the Han period Chinese poetic form the *Fu* is another example of the significance of modernism in thinking about literary worldmaking. This poetic world is not the "world" of world literature connoting extension, but a formal construct with its distinct ontology (Chapter 9, Volume I).

Works reflecting on the import of modernist paradigms in conceiving literary histories are also deeply illuminating (see Osborne 1995; Brooker 2010; Hayot 2012). The distinction between modernity as the emergence of a historical consciousness which, in turn, is a cultural form of self-consciousness (without which histories such as this one would be impossible to write), *and* of a particular history that emerged in Europe and became the normative paradigm for apprehending the world since the nineteenth century is important to recognize. The cultural self-consciousness of *contemporary* iterations of world literature lies in the recognition of the very historicity of the modern, and to interrogate its persistent normative presence in our disciplinary practices. This is the only route to establishing a modicum of commensurability between diverse literary cultures in the present.

The complex entanglement of literary modernism and world literature deserves a longer exposition than is possible here (Hayot 2012, especially chapters 6–9). I briefly signal its ramifications as they are manifested in these volumes. In her influential book, Pascale Casanova delineates her idea of literary value in the world republic of letters in terms of a writer's aesthetic autonomy from her/his cultural and political milieu. The more autonomous a writer, the greater his/her literary value. She builds her argument on classic tropes of high modernism: the autotelic work and the exilic figure of the artist as rebel. Her valorization of exilic Irish writers such as Joyce and Beckett – canonical figures in literary modernism – as against a more rooted W. B. Yeats, or a rebel proto-feminist Maria Edgeworth – serves as

a provocation for Margaret Kelleher (Chapter 18, Volume I). Kelleher paints a picture of Ireland in the world that goes beyond the legacy of towering modernists like Joyce and Beckett. The dominance of modernism as a model for literary value blindsides not only figures in Irish literature whose works have a global remit in histories of empire such as Maria Edgeworth, Yeats (the subject of vigorous postcolonial scholarship in past decades), and J.G Farrell, but also an array of contemporary writers whose works are globally oriented and circulate widely in the world republic of letters. These include Colm Tóibín, Anne Enright, John Banville, Colum McCann, Maeve Binchy, and Anna Burns (winner of the 2018 Man Booker Prize). Yet another contemporary strand in this picture of Ireland-in-the-world is the emergence of Irish-language writing by non-Irish-born authors such as Alex Hijmans, Andreas Vogel, and Panu Petteri Höglund, and the vast translation enterprises of Irish works in Norwegian, Danish, Chinese, and Kurdish.

Modernism, in certain anthological iterations of world literature, has had an unsalutary perception of African literature. African modernists rarely feature in anthologies of world literature under the period Modern and Modernism (1900–1945) even when these sections focus on African literature. In most cases, it is Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and, occasionally, Aime Cesaire's poetry that appear under this rubric (Esonwanne, Chapter 17, Volume I). Modernism, it appears, finds it hard to shed its fetishism of Africa as an ahistorical site of humankind's unconscious. The postwar and postcolonial era is when African literature proper enters the *time* of world literature. Leading Africanists like Simon Gikandi have addressed these temporal torsions by foregrounding the history of primitivism in European modernism and the significance of the afterlives of slavery for a global aesthetics of the modern (Gikandi 1992; Gikandi 2011). Recent global trends extend modernism's remit to the whole of the twentieth century and into the new millennium. These alternately crosscut and leap over the postcolonial turn in ways that are disconcerting, not to mention belated (Walkowitz 2006; Hayot 2012; Hayot and Walkowitz 2016; Vadde 2018). Modernism's cross-currents and overlaps with world literature might be perceived as its afterlife, a posthumous carrying over of traces from a century ago into our contemporary age. A mode of remediation that registers modernity itself as a historical phenomenon. Somewhere beneath lurks modernism's awareness of its own nomenclature as a misnomer, its own untimeliness in the present.

A significant rupture in the remediated consciousness of the contemporary can be named the "planetary." It is a mode of apprehending the present that emerges in the wake of modernity's fatal gamble with infinite growth

and infinite freedom; its catastrophic plunder of our planet in the name of accumulation; its violent resource wars; its laying waste not just to rainforests, oceans, and other natural habitats, but to a vast swathe of humanity it considers disposable. Doing world literature in the wake of the long twentieth century is also learning to live with worlds that die, as the final chapters of this *Cambridge History*, by Whitlock, Kennedy, Thomsen, and Nuttall, demonstrate. Genres of urgency and precarity proliferate: the memoir, the testimony, the blog, speculative fiction, and digital life story thumbed on a smartphone and circulated via encrypted social media software such as WhatsApp. This last is the subject of a reflection by Gillian Whitlock (Chapter 44), who attends to the remediated life story of a Kurdish-Iranian refugee, Behrouz Boochani, imprisoned in the Australian gulag, Manus Island. Part of a chain of carceral archipelagos or "black sites" that erupted during the global war on terror from 2001, Manus Island in northern Papua New Guinea was set up by Australia as an offshore detention site for the capture of boat people fleeing Iran, Iran, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka. Boochani's 400-page autobiographical novel *No Friends But the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* (2018) is written entirely in the form of long text messages on his smartphone. Transmitted in Farsi over five years to a human rights network across Manus, Sydney, and Cairo, and translated variously by Moones Mansoubi and Omid Tofighian for a global audience, it now circulates in a paperback edition from Picador with a foreword by the Australian novelist and activist Richard Flanagan. Boochani's autobiographical novel is part of a repertoire of emergency genres that he produced on his Galaxy S6 smartphone while being incarcerated on Manus Island. These include a documentary film, a manifesto in the form of "A letter from Manus Prison," and a series of social media posts. Another example of an emergency narrative is Mohamedou Ould Slahi's memoir *Guantanamo Diary* (2015). This harrowing testimonial account of violent capture, incarceration, rendition, travel across many black sites, arrival in Guantanamo Bay, and eventual acquittal began as a series of diary entries in Arabic from 2002. Slahi rewrote it as a long narrative in English as he slowly learned the language at the Guantanamo facility. Completed in 2012, the English version was not allowed out of the facility by US authorities. The memoir only saw light of day in 2015 after Slahi's acquittal without charge from the notorious prison. A Mauritanian by origin, Slahi lived in Germany for twelve years, trained in Afghanistan in 1990–91 as part of the Afghan war with Russia, and also lived for a few years in Montreal. Fluent in German,

French, and Arabic, he was apprehended as a classic transculturally educated Arab "terrorist" after 9/11. The entwining of Slahi's transcultural personal history with the translational history of the work, as well as the transnational history of its reception, makes *Guantanamo Diary* a quintessential world literary phenomenon. Slahi injects world history into this narrative by positioning his memoir in the tradition of holocaust testimony after Auschwitz. The book has gained an astonishing global readership, and circulates widely among human rights networks (Kennedy, Chapter 45, Volume II).

The transmediation of such emergency asylum and prison narratives redirects the circuits of world literature along vectors that can only be called planetary, especially if we reckon not just with our current moment of climate catastrophe, but the long history of settler colonialism, industrial modernity, and fossil-fuel-powered visions of human growth and freedom that have gradually eaten away at our earth's well-being. The devastated worlds of Boochani and Slahi can be seen in a continuum with other life-worlds rendered dead by histories of plantation capitalism, slavery, atomic warfare, industrial-scale agricultural revolution, and global resource wars. Necropolitical histories might now be reinscribed into the history of our planet's death gasp, so palpable in wildfires across California and southeastern Australia, not to mention the dying coral reefs across the world heritage site in Australia's northeastern coast and the waters of the Caribbean. The inscription of the planetary onto literary-humanistic modes of worlding is the subject of the final chapters in these volumes (Chapter 46 by Thomsen, and Chapter 47 by Nuttall). Lindsay Collin's carceral novel from Mauritius, *Mutiny* (2001), is shot through with wild oceanic turbulence and lashing rain to produce a heterochronic entanglement of natural and human time, what Nuttall calls the earth's "natural media work." A women's high-security electronic prison is ripped open by a tidal force of memory going back to journeys of slave ships across a turbulent Atlantic, even as a cyclone batters the facility. Margaret Atwood's *Maddadam* trilogy situates technologically enhanced species on prehistoric landscapes envisioned as a post-apocalyptic world. Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) braids geological and geopolitical histories of the Sundarbans, a deltaic region at the edge of the Bay of Bengal. Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* (2007) and Richard Power's *The Overstory* (2018) build vegetal and arbophiliac worlds that decenter the human in radical ways.

Literary objects acquire an uncanny alterity when "forcings" of the vegetal, geophysical, and climatological overwrite a humanistic language of

cultural agency, humanitarian claim-making, and ethical belonging. The planet, Spivak famously noted in her own exposition of the "death" of modern comparative literature, "is in a species of alterity belonging to another system, and yet we inhabit it" (Spivak 2003: 72). The planet belongs to a nonhuman scheme of things. Planetary thought is marked by a profound sense of non-belonging (Chakrabarty 2019). In this sense it fundamentally unsettles not just the idea of the *globe* but also the *world* whose richness we have been at pains to delineate throughout these volumes. The human "dwells" in the world through language, Heidegger famously said. From the philological bearings of world literature also erupt catastrophic histories, those of National Socialism's deadly distortion of Indo-European linguistic worldmaking into a philosophy of Aryan supremacism. The multiple linguistic and lexical variations on the term *world* – *orbis* in early Latin, *kosmos* in Greek, *Welt* in German, *'olam* in Hebrew, *viśva* in Sanskrit, *duniya* in Hindi/Urdu, *jahan* in Persian, *monde* in French – are a measure of its philological shaping as an aesthetic and a normative category, one that resists the homogenizing power of the globe as it reckons with the plenitude and singularity of literatures from around the world. These now reckon with a world of unfolding global wars and ethnic conflicts; humanitarian crises generated by the unprecedented scale of refugee movements; and environmental degradation and anthropogenic climate change. A project committed to the plenitude and diversity of linguistic-literary worlds now confronts the extinction of species on a mass scale and recurring intimations of racial extremism. With its focus on excavation, retrieval, travel, translation, exchange, preservation, mediation, comparison, intersection, networks, convergences, and cartographic and planetary shifts, *The Cambridge History of World Literature* offers a model of literary history soberly attuned to our times.

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PART I

★

GENEALOGIES

1

Ancient World Literature

DAVID DAMROSCH

The formal concept of world literature developed only during the nineteenth century, but the actual phenomenon goes back into the cosmopolitan cultures of antiquity. Many contemporary scholars, though, have followed Goethe's lead in seeing the creation and circulation of world literature as stemming from the rise of the modern nation-state and the burgeoning international markets of trade and exchange. In his conversations with his disciple Eckermann in 1827, Goethe even spoke of *Weltliteratur* as an essentially future phenomenon: as he famously remarked, "the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach" (Goethe 1984: 133). Goethe here anticipates the contemporary era of globalization, but in his discussions of *Weltliteratur* he refers frequently to premodern as well as modern literatures. He had studied Persian in order to read the fourteenth-century poet Hafiz, whom he evokes and rewrites in the *West-östlicher Divan* (1819), and he drew on the fifth-century Sanskrit dramatist Kālidāsa when writing the "Prologue in Heaven" to *Faust*. To be sure, it was only in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that non-Western works began to circulate far beyond their home region as a result of European exploration and colonialization, as Baidik Bhattacharya argues in "On Comparatism in the Colony" and in his contribution to the present collection. On this understanding, neither Kālidāsa nor Hafiz was writing world literature, a status their works only began to take on in recent centuries as they achieved worldwide fame.

A quite different understanding, however, was advanced by the Irish classicist and lawyer Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett in his pioneering study *Comparative Literature* (1886). Posnett envisioned literary history through a thoroughgoing scientism fully in keeping with his book's publication in an "International Scientific Series," where it appeared together with volumes on evolutionary theory, volcanoes, psychology, and jellyfish. Building on the work of the early sociologist Herbert Spencer and the legal historian Sir

Henry Maine, Posnett adopted a worldwide evolutionary scheme, summarized by Joseph Leerssen as the progression "from clan-system to the city-state, on to the nation and finally to a universal culture and 'world literature'" (1984: 61). Interestingly, though, Leerssen misremembers the progression that Posnett actually proposed, for Posnett saw world literature as arising in late antiquity, long *before* the birth of the modern nation. In his chapter "World-literature" – with the hyphen signifying literature written for the world beyond the writer's own community – Posnett himself notes that this ordering might seem counterintuitive, but he insists that the facts bear him out: "It may be said that our order of treatment . . . is not in harmony with prevailing ideas of literary development. Why not pass, it may be asked, from the city commonwealth to the nation, and from national literatures reach the universalism of world-literature?" (1986: 240). He answers that world-literature first developed in the Hellenistic Mediterranean world and then in the supranational religious communities of Christianity and Islam, and so he treats the "days of world-empire and world-literature" before turning to the modern national literatures (241).

Posnett assesses ancient world-literature in decidedly mixed terms. He observes that the Hellenistic writers were freed from exclusive attachment to their home locality, and so they enjoyed a heightened sense of individuality, and they were able to develop a new appreciation for nature. Yet, he argues, they also lost an organic connection to a community, instead concocting artificial constructions for distant readers. "The leading mark of world-literature," he declares, "is the severance of literature from defined social groups – the universalizing of literature, if we may use such an expression" (238). For Posnett, the Hellenistic world and then the Roman empire reflected a metastasizing rootless cosmopolitanism: "A society of such limited sympathies and unlimited selfishness was unsuited to the production of song" but only for satire and for Alexandrian commentaries (266). Warming to his theme, two pages later he denies the Roman empire any good literature at all: "if imagination depends on the existence of some genuine sense of human brotherhood, be it wide as the world or narrow as the clan, we must admit that the social life of Imperial Rome was such as must destroy any literature" (268).

Posnett's condemnation of the entire production of imperial Rome reflects the common preference in his day for "classical" purity and nobility over the demotic hybridity of late antiquity. Further, his views are inflected by his own position as a self-proclaimed "moderate Liberal" in colonial Ireland, a supporter of Home Rule in Ireland and an advocate for the reconstitution of

the British empire into a federal system (Zabel, 2019). Yet we can understand late antiquity as a breeding-ground of world literature without endorsing Posnett's dim view of its products. A good example is the *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, whose life and work provide a map of the ancient Mediterranean world. Born in about 125 CE in the Roman colony of Madauros of Numidian and Berber parentage, he studied rhetoric and philosophy first in Carthage and then in Athens, before going to Rome to study and practice law. After some years in Rome, and following a trip to Egypt, where he was initiated into the rites of Isis, he settled in Carthage. There he wrote the *Metamorphoses* together with many other works both in Latin and in Greek, including several neo-Platonist treatises.

Apuleius was certainly satirizing a corrupt society of "limited sympathies and unlimited selfishness," and he wrote in a baroque Latin filled with neologisms that mixed high style and low vernacular in a way that would have made Virgil's stately hexameters shudder. Yet he tells a serious tale of spiritual transformation even amid the hijinks of his low-life characters, and the touching tale of Cupid and Psyche forms the center of his book. Like his hapless hero Lucius, who tells the tale of his misfortunes, Apuleius' language is full of irrepressible vitality. In the prologue to the *Metamorphoses*, Lucius describes himself as a linguistic acrobat, performing "much as a circus-rider leaps from one horse to another" (1989: 1). He comically excuses his provincial Latin by asserting that his style is distorted by his bilingualism – not referring to his creator's North African Punic but to the culturally prestigious language of Greek. He uses military terms to describe his linguistic conquests: "at Athens, I served in my first campaigns with the Greek tongue. Later, in Rome, freshly come to Latin studies I assumed and cultivated the indigenous language [*indigenam sermonem*]." He then begs our pardon "if I offend as a crude performer in the exotic speech of the Forum [*exotici forensis sermonis*]" (1). Nearly 2,000 years before Dipesh Chakrabarty provincialized Europe, Apuleius opened his book by exoticizing Rome.

The *Metamorphoses* is a self-consciously worldly work: most likely written in Carthage, addressed first and foremost to a Roman audience, set in Greece, and culminating with Lucius' conversion to the worship of Isis. It is also a work of world literature in the sense that it programmatically engages with the literature of a different language and era, classical Greek, as much as with his Roman predecessors Virgil and Ovid. Like them, Apuleius revered Homer, "that godlike creator of ancient poetry among the Greeks," who sang "of him who had attained the highest virtues by visiting many cities and gaining acquaintance with various peoples" (169). His asinine hero's

wanderings become a parodic odyssey, and Lucius claims that even though he lacks Odysseus' powerful intellect, his metamorphosis into animal form – graced with huge ears – has allowed him to overhear the fund of stories he now retells. Where the Homeric epic sends Odysseus around the Mediterranean world, the cosmopolitan Apuleius returns the favor by bringing the world to Greece. Lucius encounters a Chaldean diviner, worshippers of a Syrian goddess, Egyptian priests, perfume from Arabia, and purebred horses brought from Gaul, while the witch whose ointment turns him into an ass satisfies her lust with lovers as far away as India and Ethiopia. We aren't told whether she meets them in her place or theirs, but in either event, the novel's imaginary geography maps the dimensions of the imperial Roman world.

Though Lucius himself never leaves Greece, his restoration to human form will require the aid of a more distant divinity than Odysseus' patron Athena: Isis, the Egyptian goddess of the moon and mistress of transformation. Already in his prologue, Apuleius plays on his North African authority when Lucius invites us to enjoy his "Greek-style" tale (*fabulam Graecanicam*) "as long as you don't disdain to run your eye over Egyptian papyrus inscribed with the sharpened point of a reed from the Nile" (1). In the climactic eleventh book, Isis appears to Lucius in a dream-vision and grants his fervent wish to be restored to human form, on condition that he be initiated into her mysteries and become her servant. She reveals that she has been worshipped in many forms around the world:

> I am the mother of the world of nature, mistress of all the elements, first-born in this realm of time . . . The whole world [*totus orbis*] worships this single godhead under a variety of shapes and liturgies and titles. In one land the Phrygians, first-born of men, hail me as the Pessinuntian mother of the gods, elsewhere the native dwellers of Attica call me Cecropian Minerva; in other climes the wave-tossed Cypriots name me Paphian Venus . . . the Eleusinians, the ancient goddess Ceres. (220–21)

Yet amid these worldwide metamorphoses, her Egyptian identity is ultimately the real one: "the peoples on whom the rising sun-god shines with his first rays – eastern and western Ethiopians, and the Egyptians who flourish with their time-honored learning – worship me with the liturgy that is my own, and call me by my true name, which is queen Isis" (221).

Lucius' dream initiation takes place at the city of Cenchreae, near Corinth, where there was a thriving cult of Isis. Greco-Roman-Egyptian syncretism was not uncommon in the eastern Mediterranean. Funerary portraits from

Fayum in Egypt depict the features of the deceased with Roman realism, even when a toga-clad youth is being guided into the underworld by Thoth and a mummified Osiris. In one painting, the deceased's head is framed in a hieroglyphic inscription offering him safe passage into the afterlife. Resting his weight on his left foot, he bends his right knee, ready to step into the next world. His passage will be assisted by the powerful spells contained in the sacred scroll he holds, much as Lucius' initiation is performed by priests equipped with hieroglyphic scrolls, "books headed with unfamiliar characters . . . in the shape of every kind of animal" (233). Not content either to stay in Madauros as a provincial writer or to become an assimilated Roman, Apuleius may perhaps have severed himself from close ties to any given community, as Posnett would say – though he achieved such prominence in Carthage that a statue was erected in his honor – but in the process he created a masterpiece of ancient world literature.

In Posnett's scheme, classical Greek writers had the organic connection to communities that worldly vagabonds like Apuleius lacked; Sophocles and Plato were writing in and for their *polis*, while the archaic Homeric epics were tied to the local culture of the clan or tribe, as was biblical poetry among the twelve tribes of Israel. In Alexander Beecroft's more elaborated schema, the Homeric epics (like the Chinese *Canon of Songs*) are described as "panchoric texts par excellence, as texts, in other words, that exist with the explicit aim of asserting a common identity across a politically fragmented world" (2015: 69). Beecroft discusses the Homeric epics' development within the Greek literary world, but it is possible to consider their wider relations as well. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* did not come out of nowhere; they were the end result of long traditions of narrative poetry developed not just locally but around the Eastern Mediterranean and the Fertile Crescent. As M. L. West has argued in *The East Face of Helicon* (1997), there were centuries of interchange among the Greeks and the other communities of the Levant and Anatolia – home of Troy and then a dozen cities in the coastal region known as Aeolia. These interchanges must have included stories and poems as well as the plastic arts whose remains are visible to us today. Thus, the Theogony of Hesiod – whose father came from Aeolia – shows clear relations to Near Eastern myths; the gods and goddesses of Olympus have many cousins in Mesopotamia and as far afield as India.

The Homeric epics developed orally over the course of some four centuries before they were finally written down in the eighth century, and we have no direct evidence for connections to literary epics such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, but the parallels are suggestive. Like Gilgamesh, for instance,

Achilles is the son of a mortal father and a minor goddess, and both epics are deeply concerned with the problem of mortality. Gilgamesh's thirst for adventure is fueled by a sense of the brevity of life, a theme already emphasized in the early Sumerian poem "Bilgamesh and Huwawa." In that poem, Bilgamesh tells his sidekick Enkidu that "since no man can escape life's end, / I will enter the mountain and set up my name" (George 1999: 151). He plans to win eternal fame by slaying Huwawa, the monstrous guardian of a valuable cedar forest. He then appeals for aid to the sun god Utu, and here his deep fear of death comes to the fore:

> O Utu, let me speak a word to you, give ear to what I say!
> Let me tell you something, may you give thought to it!
> In my city a man dies, and the heart is stricken,
> a man perishes, and the heart feels pain.
> I raised my head on the rampart,
> my gaze fell on a corpse drifting down the river,
>   afloat on the water:
> I too shall become like that, just so shall I be! (151)

In the later epic, Gilgamesh's counselors are deeply worried by his bold plan to seek out and slay Humbaba (as he is called in Akkadian): "You are young, Gilgamesh, borne along by emotion," they tell him; "all that you talk of you don't understand" (George 1999: 22). Gilgamesh laughs at their fears, but he realizes that he needs help, and so he asks his mother, Ninsun, to make an appeal on his behalf to the sun god (Shamash in Akkadian). She makes an incense offering and prays to Shamash, who sends thirteen powerful winds to immobilize Humbaba so that Gilgamesh can overcome him.

In the parallel scene in the *Iliad*, Achilles' divine mother Thetis pleads with Zeus to assist her son in battle. To make her appeal, Thetis ascends to the summit of Mount Olympus – the meeting-point of heaven and earth – where she finds Zeus enthroned. There, she grasps his knees with her left hand and takes him by the chin with her right hand, forcing him to look into her eyes as she makes her appeal. By contrast, in *Gilgamesh* there is no physical contact between Shamash and Ninsun, who acts for all the world just like a human priestess:

> She climbed the staircase and went up on the roof,
>   on the roof she set up a censer to Shamash.
> Scattering incense she lifted her arms in appeal to the Sun God:
>   "Why did you afflict my son Gilgamesh with so restless a spirit?
> For now you have touched him and he will tread

For now you have touched him and he will tread
the distant path to the home of Humbaba.
He will face a battle he knows not,
he will ride a road he knows not." (George 1999: 24)

Though the *Gilgamesh* epic is several centuries older than the *Iliad*, it is the product of a sophisticated written culture and is more realistic here than the Homeric epics: people don't actually ascend from earth to speak in person to the gods.

Gilgamesh and the *Iliad* portray their heavenly encounters differently, but they use the maternal appeal to similar ends. Ninsun's anxiety for her son's safety is paralleled by the fear that Thetis expresses when Achilles asks her to secure Zeus's aid in his struggles against the Trojans:

Thetis answered him then, her tears falling:
"Oh, my own child: unhappy in childbirth, why did I raise you?
Could you but stay by your ships, without tears or sorrow,
since the span of your life will be brief, of no length."
(Homer 1963: 79)

In both epics, the fragility of mortal life is dramatized through the concern of the hero's immortal mother. In each case, the hero escapes death for the time being, though his ultimate mortality shadows the entire story. Within the epics, mortality is transferred to the person of the hero's beloved friend, who tragically dies within the frame of the epic's action. In this respect, Enkidu is a direct ancestor of Patroklos, Achilles' intimate friend and lover.

Such parallels are probably not coincidental. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* circulated widely throughout the Near East; fragments of its tablets have been found at Megiddo in Palestine and at Hattusa in today's Turkey, capital of the powerful Hittite kingdom that bordered the Greek settlements along the coast. The early Greek bards were illiterate and wouldn't have been able to read cuneiform, but as West (1997) has argued, poet-singers were likely performing *Gilgamesh* in Syria and on Cyprus during the period in which the Homeric epics were being elaborated. No passages in Homer are direct translations of anything in *Gilgamesh*, but it is likely that the Homeric poets heard themes that they could adapt to their own purposes, even before writing itself reached Greece through the Phoenician traders who had adapted West Semitic alphabets used by Syrian and Canaanite groups. Adapting Near Eastern motifs to their different circumstances, the Greek poets would have been in the position of peripheral artists drawing on the older and more powerful cultures to their east. Through such means of

transmission, Achilles and his restless fellow hero Odysseus came to bear a distinct family resemblance to Gilgamesh, their greatest epic predecessor.

The Epic of Gilgamesh circulated in its various forms over the course of a millennium and a half, both in Akkadian and in translation into Hittite and other languages. One reason for its wide distribution is that excerpts were used as school texts for writing practice in cuneiform, as the epic has everything a teacher could desire: sex, violence, and good vocabulary. The scribal culture that was grounded in cuneiform extended beyond the dimensions of Beecroft's "panchoric" literature of a broad linguistic community, as it was adapted for a range of languages and across the shifting boundaries of the region's empires. Cuneiform created a strong bond across societies like the Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian, and Hittite empires, whose leaders were often at each other's throats. As a result, even when (as often) Mesopotamia and the broader Fertile Crescent were politically fragmented under various regimes, it is appropriate to speak in literary terms of a single cuneiform "scriptworld," as I have previously called it (2007) – a script-based analog of what Sheldon Pollock has termed "the Sanskrit cosmopolis" in South Asia.

This was a cosmopolitan world that not everyone wanted to join. As cuneiform extended its reach, some cultures made a choice to resist absorption into the hegemonic scriptworld by developing or maintaining a local literary language and script, shielding their work from foreign eyes. In an early version of the "right to untranslatability" proposed by Emily Apter in *Against World Literature* (2013: 254), this would be an ancient right to illegibility. This perspective can be clearly seen in the biblical Book of Daniel, when the evil king Belshazzar is baffled when God writes his punishment on the wall. Admittedly, Belshazzar himself probably could not read (Near Eastern monarchs rarely bothered to learn), but when he calls his wise men to interpret the writing on the wall, none of them can understand it either. This portion of Daniel is written in Aramaic, a language commonly spoken throughout Mesopotamia by Belshazzar's time, and the Aramaic terms that God uses (*mene*, *tekel*, *parsin*) have clear cognates in Akkadian as well. But these common words mean nothing to the Babylonians, whom the biblical writer satirically portrays as incompetent outside the boundaries of their imperial script. The wise men are not just unable to interpret the message, they cannot even parse the words to begin with: "Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king the interpretation. Then King Belshazzar became greatly terrified, and his face turned pale, and his lords were perplexed" (Daniel 5:8–9, NRSV). The king is forced to call for the young Hebrew captive Daniel, who can read the words

and explain the King's fate to him. With divine irony, God makes Belshazzar an offer he cannot refuse in a script he cannot even read.

During the long period of Babylonian exile that began in 597 BCE and lasted until around 537, the deported Hebrew scribes developed an *anti*-world-literature – not simply a local tradition unaware of the wider world, but a corpus that draws extensively on the writings of the pagan culture surrounding the writers, even as they reject that culture outright. Several biblical books build on Babylonian precursors, but they do so through polemical rewriting or mistranslation, rather than in the modes of translation and expansive adaptation more common within the cuneiform world itself.

The biblical story of the Flood famously resembles the flood story told to Gilgamesh by his ancestor Utnapishtim in the eleventh tablet of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, and given the epic's wide distribution, it is entirely possible that the Hebrew writers knew the epic. Alternatively, both stories may derive from a common Babylonian source, *The Atrahasis Epic*, as Jeffrey Tigay (1982) has argued. Yet as with the echoes of *Gilgamesh* in Homer, the relation to the Bible is not one of translation, and in the biblical case we find a pointed retelling from a very different perspective. The Bible puts the moral burden on sinful humanity, whereas the Babylonian works assign the major responsibility to the fickle gods. Disturbed in their sleep by the noisy human race, the gods impulsively decide to wipe them off the face of the earth, and then are horrified when they realize what evil they have unleashed. Belet-ili, the goddess who brought on the flood, cries out in bitter regret:

> How could I speak evil in the gods' assembly,
> and declare a war to destroy my people?
> It is I who gave birth, these people are mine!
> And now, like fish, they fill the ocean!
>
> (George 1999: 92)

The Bible rejects the Babylonian conception of a polytheistic empyrean whose members are subject to all-too-human impulses and misjudgment, and so the Noah story can only be told from a radically different perspective. While they picked up the outlines of the story and various specific details from the older texts, the biblical writers turned the story upside down in the process – as well as retelling it in prose rather than in verse, a change that further muted anything resembling outright translation.

The Book of Job also has a Babylonian source, and we might expect it to have a less polemical relation to it. After all, the Book of Job is a far less orthodox work than Genesis: its characters are not even identified as

Hebrews, and it disturbingly questions the justice of God. Yet it too departs dramatically from the terms of its source, "The Babylonian Theodicy." The Babylonian poem displays an orthodoxy inscribed in its very form, which is an extended acrostic. The poem consists of twenty-seven stanzas of eleven lines each, and all eleven lines in each stanza begin with the same sign. Taken together, the twenty-seven signs spell out a ringing endorsement of the religious and political order: *a-na-ku sa-ag-gi-il-ki-i-nam-ub-bi-ib, ma-aš-ma-šu, ka-ri-bu ša i-li ú ša-ar-ri*: "I am Saggil-kinam-ubbib, incantation-priest, adorer of the gods and the king" (Lambert 1960: 64). The Book of Job explodes its source both formally and conceptually, utterly rejecting the possibility that Jahweh might intend evil.

The biblical relation to Akkadian sources, then, is one of wary distance at best, resulting in fundamental transformations and even deliberate mistranslation. In Genesis, for example, the Yahwistic writer claims that Babylon took its name from the Hebrew verb *balal*, "to babble" (Genesis 11:9). This is a satiric jab at the Hebrews' oppressive, polytheistic neighbors and periodic overlords, ignoring the obvious derivation of "Babylon" from Akkadian *bab-ilī*, "Gate of God" – the god in question being Babylon's patron god Marduk, whose ziggurat dominated the city. In a kind of scribal in-joke, "Babel" is less an affirmation of divine power than a scribal error, based on a careless diplography, writing בבל ("b-b-l") instead of בלל ("b-l-l") in vowel-less Hebrew.

Less flamboyant than the Yahwists who wrote the account of Babel, the Priestly writers who composed Genesis 1 were equally insistent in avoiding a translational link between Hebrew and Babylonian culture: when God creates the sun and moon, the text denies them their plain Hebrew names, *shemesh* and *yareah*, instead speaking awkwardly of the "big light" and the "little light" (*ma'or gadol* and *ma'or katin*, Genesis 1:14–18). In this way the Priestly writers avoid naming the Babylonian sun god, Shamash, or the divine moon (Akkadian *irihu*, cognate of Hebrew *yareah*). The entire story of the Tower of Babel, seemingly a tragic tale of linguistic loss and dispossession, may have conveyed an almost opposite valence: it is a story of resistance, an account of how Akkadian lost its claim to be spoken by everyone, thanks to the Babylonians' impious pride.

During their long exile in Babylon, and the much longer period of cuneiform prestige across much of the Near East, the Hebrew scribes made a deliberate choice to nurture their own culture not only by preserving their language but also by refusing to shift into the cosmopolitan script of the more powerful cultures to their north and east, or the magnificent

hieroglyphics of imperial Egypt. When the psalmist sings of the Hebrews hanging their harps in the willow trees *al naharoth Bavel*, "by the waters of Babylon," too sad to sing, this scene does not only portray sorrow, still less an inability to sing – conveyed as it is in some of the most moving verses in the Bible. Rather, the scene describes the Hebrews' stubborn *refusal* to sing for their foreign masters:

> On the willows there
> we hung up our harps.
> For there our captors
> asked us for songs,
> and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
> "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
> How could we sing the Lord's song
> in a foreign land? (Psalm 137:2–4)

In that climactic line, *eik nashir et-shir-Adonai al admath nekhar?*, the term *nekhar*, "foreign," is aptly chosen for its Babylonian setting: it is cognate with Akkadian *nakarum*, which means "enemy" or "rebel." The psalmist ends by expressing his rebellious enmity in a stark appeal for revenge against his hated hosts: "Happy shall he be who takes your little ones / and dashes them against the rock!" (137:9). Though these lines apostrophize the Hebrews' captors, the psalmist certainly did not want any actual Babylonians to get this message. Little wonder that the Hebrews did not choose to sing anything like this for the Babylonians – and little wonder that they clung to their uncouth script, a further shield from prying eyes.

*

In sum, the Near East and the Mediterranean were home to a variety of ancient world literatures in the Hellenistic age and imperial Rome and even a millennium before then. A writer such as Virgil, ensconced at the heart of Roman literary culture and patronized by the Emperor Augustus, was in a sense born as a world writer, while Apuleius had to move from the provinces to achieve greatness in the imperial Roman world; by contrast – to continue the analogy to Malvolio – the Hebrew writers had world literature thrust upon them. The result was that they created an anti-world-literature that paved the way for many later literatures of anti-imperial resistance – some of them, such as the African-American spirituals, drawing directly on the biblical accounts of exile in Babylon and oppression in Egypt.

It is appropriate that *The Epic of Gilgamesh* had its origins in a series of poems commissioned by one of the earliest Mesopotamian empire builders, a ruler who was also the world's first known patron of literature. Four thousand years ago, the Sumerian king Shulgi of Ur (r. 2094–2047 BCE) proclaimed himself to be the preserver and restorer of an ancient literary heritage. "My wisdom is full of subtlety," he declares in one of the many encomia he wrote or commissioned for himself, and his subtle wisdom included using the soft power of culture for political purposes. "I am no fool," he continues, "as regards the knowledge acquired since the time that heaven above set mankind on its path." When he discovered "hymns from past days, old ones from ancient times," Shulgi says, "I have conserved these antiquities, never abandoning them to oblivion." He ordered the old poems added to his singers' repertoire, "and thereby I have set the heart of the Land on fire and aflame" ("Šulgi B," lines 270–80).

Most particularly, he treasured poems concerning Gilgamesh, wishing to associate himself and his nascent empire with the prestige of the great king who had ruled nearby Uruk some five centuries before. In several hymns, Shulgi declares that like Gilgamesh he was the child of the goddess Ninsun, and he often speaks of Gilgamesh as his brother. He compares his military prowess to that of Gilgamesh, using appropriate flood imagery in the comparison – "Shulgi, roaring like a rising flood against the rebel lands, embraces Gilgamesh, his brother and friend, his comrade" ("Šulgi D," lines 291–92). In particular, he associates himself with Gilgamesh's underworld position as a judge, a role that Shulgi plays on earth: "Like my brother and friend Gilgamesh, I can recognize the virtuous and I can recognize the wicked. The virtuous gets justice in my presence, and the wicked and evil person will be carried off . . . Who like me is able to interpret what is spoken in the heart or is articulated on the tongue?" ("Šulgi C," lines 107–11). Shulgi commissioned the series of Sumerian poems that would later become the basis for the Gilgamesh epic, setting the stage for the composition of the world's earliest masterpiece of world literature. At the time, no one in the world could read and write outside the new scribal class in Sumer and its equivalent in Old Kingdom Egypt. Even so, in one of his poems Shulgi already envisions himself as becoming a world-famous poet:

> Now, I swear by the sun god Utu on this very day – and my younger brothers shall be witness of it in foreign lands where the sons of Sumer are not known, where people do not have the use of paved roads, where they have no access

> to the written word – that I, the firstborn son, am a fashioner of words, a composer of songs, a composer of words, and that they will recite my songs as heavenly writings, and that they will bow down before my words.
>
> ("Šulgi B," lines 358–72)

The poem ends with praise of Shulgi's patron goddess, Inanna, whom Shulgi thanks not only for her protection but also for her editorial assistance: "Inanna, the queen of the gods, the protective deity of my power, has perfected the songs of my might – the foremost among kings – in respect of everything in the whole world" (lines 380–84). The poem concludes with a dual encomium, to Shulgi himself and to Gilgamesh's aunt, sister of his mother, Ninsun: "It is good to praise me. Praise be to Nisaba" (line 385). Nisaba is the goddess of writing and learning: under her divine tutelage, Shulgi of Ur has inaugurated the world's earliest world literature and has caused both Gilgamesh's name and his own to be recited in distant lands around the world today.

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2

The Silk Roads of World Literature

WEN-CHIN OUYANG

The Silk Road is today a metaphor of global connectedness in the past and at present. German traveler, geographer, and scientist Baron Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen (1833–1905) coined the term in 1877, alternately as *Seidenstraße* ("Silk Road[s]") and *Seidenstraßen* ("Silk Route[s]"). The Silk Road initially referred to territorial routes connecting East Asia and South Asia with West Asia and Southern Europe along which the lucrative silk trade took place. It now encompasses the spice routes, or the maritime trade roads connecting East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe along which spices are transported and sold around the world. China's current "One Belt and One Road Initiative" brings the historical trade routes from ancient and medieval times into the twenty-first century and beyond Asia, Africa, and Europe to include the Americas and Oceania.

The Silk Road, as a set of overlapping networks of circulation transporting people and goods around the globe, has today further been reinvented as "a model for idealized exchange" and "a condition or strategy for geopolitical thought and action" (Chin 2013: 195). As such it has often served as a useful "roadmap" for thinking about "worlding" of objects in art history, of ideas in intellectual history, and of musical traditions in ethnomusicology. In this chapter I argue that it can also serve as a roadmap for thinking about modes of circulation in world literature in ways that take us beyond current theories and practices of reading.

If we imagine the Silk Road as comprising multiple networks connected through myriad contact hubs located across many temporal and spatial planes, it can help us to go beyond the familiar accounts of cultural encounter and exchange that are at the heart of comparative and world studies today. In the particular context of world literature, it allows us to see movement of ideas, motifs, aesthetics, bodies of knowledge, texts, genres, and literary worlds in a more complex fashion than the linear trajectory of West

influencing the East, the centrifugal proliferation of the European novel around the world (Moretti 2006), or the centripetal East coming to the West for a place in the world traveling on the waves of translation from one Eastern national canon to an international canon located in London, New York, and Paris (Casanova and Damrosch). It can even take us beyond the single temporality of the global visions of "modern," "colonial," and "postcolonial," "planetarity" (Spivak), "globalization" and its attendant "networks" (Cooppan, Siskind 2013), and "cosmopolitanism" (Holden). *The 1001 Nights* (or *The Arabian Nights*) is a classic example of the global circulation of a "text" beyond "translation-as-circulation" and the confines of monologically defined language, nation, genre, and historical period. This body of stories that came to be known first in the tenth century is today a compendium of stories shaped by a millennium of global circulation along the Silk Road through translation, adaptation, quotation, and creative invention.

The 1001 Nights: Global Circulation, Mediated Translation, Textual Formation

Muḥammad Ibn Isḥaq al-Nadīm (d. 995 or 998) famously wrote of the Arabic *Alf layla* (one thousand nights) as an Arabic translation of a storybook originally written in Persian known as *Hazār afsān*, or a thousand stories, which, he explained, were "fictional tales" "told at night" (Ibn al-Nadīm 363). Alexander the Great, Ibn al-Nadīm let it be known, was in truth the first person ever (in history) who turned to storytelling at night during his military campaigns; he used to have among his entourage clowns and storytellers, not for entertainment but for keeping vigil. Kings after him used *Hazār afsān* for similar purposes. *Hazār afsān* (363), the first storybook ever, said to have been written for a Persian princess by the name of Humani daughter of Bahman, begins with a king, who took a different woman every night and killed her at dawn, eventually marrying a princess (a daughter of one of the kings) by the name of Shahrazād, who was both "intelligent and wise," and who started telling him stories at night but stopped in mid track at dawn. He stayed her execution so as to find out the ending of the story the following night. This went on for one thousand nights, until she bore him a child. When she confessed her machinations, the king, rather than punishing her for her deception, fell in love with this wise woman and remained married to her (363).

In the tenth century, and by the time Ibn al-Nadīm compiled *Fihrist*, the catalogue of the extensive holdings in his bookshop in Baghdad, Arabic

writers, whom he described as "versed in the literary arts" (363), had already polished its language and begun to write in a similar vein. The book contained fewer than 200 stories, for each would be told over a period of a few nights. It was written in "an insipid language," but this did not prevent literary figures such as al-Jahshiyārī (d. 942), the renowned tenth-century author of the *Book of Viziers and Secretaries*, from emulating its form and collecting Arabic, Persian, and Greek stories in one book, albeit eschewing that night-within-and-into-night structure of storytelling. Each night would instead contain a complete story. Al-Jahshiyārī collected 480 stories or nights, and copied them by hand into around fifty folios, but he died before he could bring the number up to a full thousand.

The *Nights*, despite its popularity even among the cultural elite of the Arabic-Islamic world, was of no literary consequence in Arabic until the modern era. The text acquired world literature status in Europe in the eighteenth century, when Antoine Galland (1646–1715) translated, or rather adapted into French, a body of stories from a fifteenth-century manuscript and other sources in two volumes (1704 and 1717). The *Nights* fever spread like wild fire, across Europe first, then around the world. The *Nights* in the state-of-the-art research is a shape-shifting chameleon that survives and thrives in globe-trotting and crossing historical, geographical, cultural, linguistic, medial, and generic boundaries. However, it remains without a definitive "original" text in any language. The known "full" texts in Arabic, the Egyptian version published in Bulāq (1835), and the Indian version published in Calcutta, known as Macnaghten or Calcutta II (1839–42), took shape in the aftermath of Galland's translation, developing from and expanding on his fifteenth-century manuscript by appending to it a variety of analogous manuscripts. Similarly, the post-Galland global proliferation of the "Oriental Tale," including *Aladdin* and *Ali Baba*, two "orphan tales" traceable neither to oral nor written Arabic origins, have proliferated across the world in the past century.

The premodern global network of translation, adaptation, quotation, and creation, from East and South Asia to the Mediterranean, that produced the textual network, or a body of overlapping texts written in a "middle" register of the Arabic language, has yet to be fully mapped. However, it is clear that the *Nights*, as a canonical work of world literature, exists only in the interstices of translation, mediated through Arabic version first before the tenth century, followed by French in Europe in the eighteenth century, then by English, especially Burton, in the nineteenth century, and thereafter proliferated in other languages. The kernel of the Arabic full texts is possibly a body

of tales purportedly translated from Persian, which itself may have constituted a body of stories from multiple sources, such as Greek and Indian, onto which stories of all kinds and from all cultures are grafted throughout the ages. Galland's fifteenth-century manuscript is but one rendition of the *Nights*. Since the eighteenth century, European translations, including pseudo-translations and creations of oriental tales, have contributed to its making, even to the rise of its standing in Arabic literature.

The reception of the *Nights* in Chinese, to name but one example, adds another layer of complication to the story of the globalization of the *Nights*. It was the popularity of the *Nights* in Europe that prompted the Chinese to translate the stories from European languages. But this did not happen until 1900, even though European (and especially English) translations of the *Nights* were available in China at the latest by 1870, when Kelly and Walsh, the first foreign bookshop, was founded in Shanghai. The *Nights* found its way into Chinese most likely through translations from European languages, especially Burton in English (1885–88). A Zhou Gueisheng translated a selection of stories from the *Nights* in 1900, which he called *Yi Qian Ling Yi Ye*. There is in the Chinese Union Library Catalogue a record of a four-volume translation by a Xi Rou published in Shanghai in 1906. These and other translations, as well as adaptations from translations and adaptations from adaptations, all invariably given the titles *Tian Fang Ye Tan* or *Yi Qian Ling Yi Ye*, have been in continuous production until today. There is, it seems, a steady stream of *Nights* books in Chinese throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *Tian Fang Ye Tan* is practically a literal translation of *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, including the archaic and exotic "twang," or slant Burton has given the *Nights* in his translation.

In the 1930s, during the Chinese resistance to Japanese occupation, another stream of translations from the Arabic original, primarily Bulāq, began to appear under the title *Yi Qian Ling Yi Ye*, a literal translation of the Arabic "one thousand and one nights." Two names emerge as heroes of such an enterprise. A Mr. Na Xun, apparently a Chinese Muslim, who made a five-volume translation in the 1930s known at the time as *Tian Fang Ye Tan*. In the 1950s a three-volume translation by the same Mr. Na appeared as *Yi Qian Ling Yi Ye*. Finally, a six-volume translation, a complete translation according to his Beijing publisher, appeared in 1982. This 1982 Beijing edition by Na Xun is the source text of a two-volume Taipei edition purportedly translated by a Zhong Si. Zhong, according to the "readers' guide" written by a Su Qikang, a professor of English, at most edited Na's translation, restructured the work, and reorganized the stories. Zhong's translation, however, has been very

popular (Su 1999: xii) and is in continuous demand since it first appeared in 1981. It is in its sixth reprint at least.[1] And finally, a ten-volume translation of the Bulāq text was made by the now professor of Arabic at Beijing's Language Institute Li Weizhong and published in Taipei in 2000. This translation is given the title of *Yi Qian Ling Yi Ye*.

The *Nights* is known as *Tian Fang Ye Tan* or *Yi Qian Ling Yi Ye*, Chinese renditions of the *Arabian Nights* and *The 1001 Nights* respectively. It is primarily known as a collection of children's stories. *Tian Fang* is the classical Chinese term for a region that is perhaps best conveyed by the medieval English term *Araby* (Metlizki 1977). *Ye Tan* means night talk, nothing like serious discussion but more like "table talk," or casual exchange of news and stories, or simply chatter. "Sindbad the Sailor" and "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" are the two most popular stories even today. There are innumerable versions and editions of children's *Tian Fang Ye Tan*, all attributed to an anonymous "Arab" author, "*yi ming*," and they come in a plethora of shapes and sizes with little or next to no information on the sources and "authors" – compilers and translators – of the volumes. There is even less accounting for why some stories are chosen for inclusion and others are left out. Perhaps what is most interesting about the popularity of the *Nights* in Chinese is the ways in which the title and many of the objects have been integrated into the fabric of Chinese language and culture today. *Tian Fan Ye Tan* and Aladdin's magic lamp are bywords for the fantastic, and *Yi Qian Ling Yi Ye* denotes multiplicity and variety and now appears as verbatim quotations in titles of collections of short stories and even essays in literary criticism.

The role of Europe in the spread, translation, and reception of an Arabic work in Chinese provides an alternative trajectory of circulation to that of European translation and reception of the *Nights*. There is also the possibility of translating from Japanese translations, especially in Taiwan, a former Japanese colony, where early multi-volume Japanese translations (from as early as 1875) may have been known and available. Furthermore, Taiwan, like Japan and other East Asian countries, has played an active part in worldwide adaptations of the *Nights* in poetry, drama, short story, novel, theater, pantomime, cinema, television, animation, graphic storybooks, and even pornography. For these reasons it is impossible to track with any certainty clear trajectories of circulation of the motifs, stories, and ideologies (e.g., gendered master and slave relationship). This is precisely why the *Nights* has invited both "distant" and "close" readings in ways that take us beyond

1 The reprints appeared in 1981, 1984, 1985, 1994, 1997, and 1999.

current practices of world literature. The *Nights* allows us to look at circulation outside the East-to-West binary, and to consider circulation as taking place across languages, texts, and genres along divergent but overlapping networks connected by multiple contact hubs. It also draws our attention to the politics surrounding both translation and canon formation, nationally or internationally, and their machinery, as well as the cultural encounters informing and underpinning the literary worlds. It makes it possible and necessary to re-politicize representations of cultural encounters, whether in the literary world (Hayot 2012) or outside in the machinery supporting, managing, and promoting world literature.

The literary world is often saturated with traces of cultural encounter, including bodies of knowledge, such as orientalism (Ouyang 2018), whose itineraries of travel around the globe resonate with the Silk Road. The Silk Road haunts many literary works inhabited by people, things, ideas, ideologies, and even entire cultural institutions that have come from far and wide to partake in the construction of their textual world. "The Tale of the Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad," in *The 1001 Nights*, is a good example. It begins like this:

> There was once a young man in the city of Baghdad, who was by faith a bachelor and by trade a porter. One day, as he was leaning idly against his basket in the marketplace, a woman, wearing a full, veil of Mosul *silk*, tasseled with gold and turned with rare brocade, stopped before him and raised the veil a little from her face. Above it there showed dark eyes with long lashes of *silk* and lids to set a man dreaming. Her body was slight, her feet were very small, and clear perfection shone about her. She said, and oh, but her voice was sweet: "Take up your basket, porter, and follow me."
> (Mardrus in Ouyang 2014: 81, emphasis mine)

It then goes on to name fruits and flowers from around the Middle East that the young woman buys and puts in the porter's basket. Silk, brought from China to the Middle East along the Silk Road, has clearly set roots in the Middle East, as the reference to Mosul silk indicates. It has spawned not only local farming and industry but also technologies of weaving, embroidery, and couture, as well as fashion, wealth, and social standing. Silk farming continued to be a source of economy in Syria and Lebanon under the French occupation in the nineteenth century even though its industry would now be surpassed by France. France had her own history of silk industry; luxury silk items were made in France with Syrian and Lebanese raw material and exported back to the Middle East at a much higher price. The silk trade

gave rise to a new middle class in the nineteenth century that was instrumental in the development of a modern Arabic literary culture and the emergence of the Arabic novel (Holt 2017). Hoda Barakat's novel *The Tiller of Waters* (1998), for example, weaves a cosmopolitan history of Beirut by threading the movement of silk commodities around the world along the Silk Road through the prism of this Mediterranean port city.

Silk is not simply an object in the *Nights* or *The Tiller of Waters*. It embodies a history of travel around the globe, setting roots wherever it goes, and generating new markets as well as industries, technologies, and cultures. It has imprinted itself in the fabric of language and literary worlds. Silk is too obvious and easy an example of the ways in which world, connected by the Silk Road, inhabits the literary world. There are numerous objects appearing in literary works that on the surface seem mundane but, upon close scrutiny, reveal themselves to be signs of global circulation haunted by a history of production and consumption in multiple regions connected by overlapping networks across plural temporalities. At the same time, they embody the divergent styles of consumption developed with attendant new technologies and cultures. These are in turn implicated in local cultural politics surrounding intercultural exchange. Coffee, like silk, is a good example. A much more recent commodity than silk, the history of coffee's origins and proliferation, and of its production and consumption as well as attendant technologies, material culture, rituals, and spaces, has been mapped more fully than that of silk. It is fairly easy to track the global movement of coffee, as plant, bean and husk, from Ethiopia in Africa, through Yemen, starting in the fifteenth century and continuing in the twenty-first century, to the Middle East, Europe, and South America, and to Asia and Southeast Asia. Its consumption led to increased farming in suitable habitats, in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, often replacing other agricultural products, to the production of pots for making coffee and china for serving it, to the birth of spaces and rituals of consumption at home or in the coffeehouse, in the morning, in the afternoon, or at night, for social or religious purposes, and to the emergence and development of subcultures in which coffee is a site of discourses on identity and cultural politics.

Coffee, Empire, and Literary Worlds

The Coffee Road, or the map of the movement of coffee around the globe, overlaps with and at the same time diverges from the Silk Road. The Coffee

Road connects overlapping empires in the past and at present, which are all arguably Silk Road empires: Ottoman (1299–1920), Portuguese (1415–1999), Spanish (1492–1975), Habsburg (1526–1780), Dutch (1581–1815), British (sixteenth century–1997), French (sixteenth century–1962), Qing (1644–1912), Japanese (1818–1947), and American (nineteenth century–present). These empires intersect in both temporal and territorial terms, but they each establish a unique network of commodity exchange, take turns in dominating the world market, and bring into existence a culture of consumption that is simultaneously informed by global and local practices. The Coffee Road, like the Silk Road, is implicated in colonial competitions for land, commodity, and market. Coffee, as global commodity, has spread around the world from Africa, along the Silk Road and additional routes, and put down roots at varying contact hubs, where it also picked up local habits and created unique cultures of consumption. The world reflected in and through coffee differs from one contact hub to another. More importantly, coffee remembers its history, thrives in cultural encounter, and finds expressions in literary works.

Coffee is a site of cultural encounter in literary works and offers another alternative model of worldliness and global circulation. A comparative reading of coffee and its culture of consumption, epitomized by the coffeehouse, in contemporary Arabic (Egyptian and Palestinian) and Turkish literary texts on the one hand, and Japanese and Taiwanese works on the other, demonstrates this amply. The Middle East and the Far East, if I may borrow two orientalist regional designations for the sake of brevity and clarity, offer two distinct models of worldliness structured around coffee and coffeehouses that give shape to literary worlds and generate diverse meanings of coffee in the literary works. Even the role Europe plays as an intermediary in the spread of coffee from the Middle East to the Far East has an impact on the shape of the literary world. The presence of coffee, as well as coffeehouses, in literary works opens up the literary world to global connections beyond translation, adaptation, quotation, and attendant creative invention. The map of world literature it draws presents multiple centers connected by manifold networks of circulation, and as such it encourages diversification not only in defining modes of circulation and reading but also in understanding world and worldliness. It offers a new model for the practice of world literature that goes even beyond the scope of *The 1001 Nights*, and makes it possible for us to bring together diverse literary works from around the world in a meaningful comparative analysis.

Reference to coffee drinking first appeared in the mid-fifteenth century in Sufi circles in Yemen (Mocha). It pervaded the Middle East and North Africa

by the sixteenth century and spread to Europe in the seventeenth century and eventually to the rest of the world. The Dutch East India Company brought it to Japan in the seventeenth century. However, it did not take off in Japan until the nineteenth century. Taiwan was a Japanese colony between 1895 and 1952, and coffee arrived there at the turn of the twentieth century. With its own farming colonies in Brazil, Japan was able to establish its own network of supply outside the European networks during the height of European power in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In fact, it encouraged coffee plantation in Taiwan as well. Coffee quickly became a social drink and coffeehouses, from the simple hole in the wall in poor quarters to the familiar shops in middle-class neighborhoods and the luxurious palatial edifice in the wealthy districts, came into existence in very quick succession around the world to become an integral part of urban life from the sixteenth century: Mecca before 1512, Damascus in 1530, Cairo thereabouts, Istanbul after 1555, Venice 1629, Rome 1645, Oxford in 1650, London in 1652, Paris in 1657, The Hague after 1664, Tokyo in 1888, and Taipei after 1896. Coffee is the daily drink we know today and more. It was consumed day and night. Coffeehouses, unlike the coffee shops dotting cityscapes open only till early evening in the twenty-first century, were open all hours, serving in addition to coffee other stimulants dependent on where one was.

Coffee is a staple feature of the fictional world of Naguib Mahfouz (1911–2006). It is modeled on Cairo's coffee culture and as such informs the representation of coffee and coffeehouses in his novels. The day begins with a cup of coffee at home, is punctuated by another in the afternoon at work, and ends with more in the coffeehouse in the evening. The coffeehouse is the heart and soul of a community. In *Arabian Nights and Days* (1995), Mahfouz's creative rewrite of *The 1001 Nights* as a national allegory, the Café of the Emirs is a space where the community comes together to enjoy each other's company and, above all, to exchange news of the day and discuss the most pressing moral and political issues. It already appears in an earlier national allegory set in an old Cairene quarter, *Midaq Alley* (1947). Here, the café in the old Cairene quarter is a place where male members of the community congregate to catch up on the news of the individual and nation, to resolve conflicts, and make deals. It is also a *hashish* den where older male predators go after young boys. There is only one difference between the café in the fantastically rendered national allegory of *Arabian Nights and Days* and the realist *Midaq Alley*. The poet who sings stories of the community remains in place in the former but is replaced by a radio in the latter. Coffee and coffeehouses do not exist in the *Nights*, and Mahfouz implants them in the

literary world of the *Nights* to locate his national allegory in the present day.[2] The coffeehouse in *Arabian Nights and Days* is, one may argue, a Habermasian "public sphere" where "democracy" is born. The political elite, the merchant class, the labourers, and even the riffraff come together in this space, and by working through their experiences of political authority and its corruptive potential the citizens learn to choose "moral" men as the "rulers" of their community (Ouyang 2012).

The Mahfouzian novel takes it for granted that coffee is an integral part of life in Cairo. Coffee is a marker of identity and its authenticity in Arabic literary writings and cultural expressions. It comes from Yemen in Southern Arabia in the Arabic cultural and literary imaginary, and has been an Arab drink since time immemorial. Yemen gave it to the rest of the world. In televised adaptations of pre-Islamic Bedouin romances, often centered in heroic poets, coffee and its drinking rituals take on communal and symbolic meanings especially at times of tribal conflict. Coffee is always ready to be served. When a delegation from an opposing tribe arrives at the tent, the host would have coffee offered to the members. If they come in peace they would drink it right away. If they come in strife, they would postpone drinking it until the contentious issue they raise is resolved to their satisfaction. In Jordan today – and many Jordanians and Palestinians claim Bedouin ancestry – coffee is kept in a thermos-flask ready to be offered to any visitor at any time of the day or night. Similarly, guests with friendly intentions take a sip and shake the flask up in the air in a gesture of acceptance, and guests with a bone to pick refuse the drink. Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008), the Palestinian national poet, gives coffee the pride of place in symbols of Palestine. A poem dedicated to his mother, "To My Mother," appearing in a collection of his early poetry, *A Lover from Palestine* (1966), begins with "I long for my mother's bread, my mother's coffee, and my mother's touch," and ends with a will to return to her, to her embrace and care, to her house, and to Palestine. Coffee is Palestinianness here, and it escalates from a symbol of resistance to Palestine herself in *Memory for Forgetfulness* (1986), Darwish's one-day memoir written during the Israeli bombing of Beirut in 1982 (14 June–21 August) after which PLO headquarters were forced to move to Tunis. Coffee is the thread that connects the poet, his body, and humanity, "so I can hold myself together, stand on my feet, and be transformed from something that crawls, into a human being" (6), to a steely will that "propel[s]

2 The oldest fuller manuscript of this compendium of stories belonged in the fifteenth century and most likely predated the arrival of coffee in the Middle East.

my thirst in the direction of the one and only goal: coffee" (7), and finally to an imagined "return" to the "primordial," to "[c]offee is geography" (20), to Palestine.

The "primordial" origin of coffee in the works of Mahfouz and Darwish is arguably the type of "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) that gives the "imagined nation" in their texts "roots in the immemorial past" (Anderson [1983] 1991). This serves their national and nationalist politics well, but it clearly goes against the grain of history and reduces the global past of coffee to "authenticity" based in "local origin." Orhan Pamuk reverses this type of single-minded and unilateral construction of the history of coffee in *My Name is Red* (1988), restoring to coffee its global past in an assertion of Turkey's cosmopolitan identity that similarly has roots in the past. The Silk Road and Coffee Road intersect in this novel, which is ostensibly a murder mystery but allegorically an interrogation of violence legitimated in the "myth of authenticity" inherent in discourses that will the nation into existence out of the murky waters of empire(s). The novel is set in Istanbul in 1591 against the background of the Ottoman Safavid War and the competitive Ottoman and European trade and diplomatic relations. It begins with the murder of a miniaturist, Elegant Affendi, who is a member of a secret group of illuminators commissioned to illustrate a manuscript in the Venetian style. Another murder, that of the master illuminator and leader of the group known as Enishte, follows, leading to a full investigation during which numerous attempted murders are made. When the murderer is revealed at the end of the novel, it transpires that the motive behind the murders is precisely to safeguard the secret commission against the parallel conflict around coffee. The novel culminates in violence, the destruction of the coffeehouse the miniaturists frequented, and in the death of many, including the murderer.

At the heart of the controversy is the planned portrait of the Ottoman Sultan that would rival the "realism" of the Venetian style of representation, as opposed to the "stylized" style of traditional "Islamic" miniatures. Pamuk resurrects the historical coffee controversies in Istanbul and other parts of the Islamic lands including Mecca and Cairo between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that resulted in disputes, bans, and violence. These offer a powerful backdrop for the murder in the novel. Venetian style "realism" is, in this context, an innovation, or *bidʿa*, not sanctioned by tradition. "Coffee drinking," according to a certain Husret Hoja, "is an absolute sin!" This Husret Hoja even invents a Prophetic tradition. "Our Glorious Prophet did not partake of coffee because he knew it dulled the intellect, caused uclers,

hernia and sterility; he understood that coffee was nothing but the Devil's ruse" (14). Venetian-style painting is linked to coffee drinking in another way. "Coffeehouses," where a storyteller unfolds a picture of a dog before the crowd and tells tales in his voice (12), "are places where pleasure-seekers and wealthy gadabouts sit knee-to-knee, involving themselves in all sorts of vulgar behaviour; in fact, even before the dervish houses are closed, coffee-houses ought to be banned. Do the poor have enough money to drink coffee? Men frequent these places, become besotted with coffee and lose control of their mental faculties to the point that they actually listen to and believe what dogs and mongrels have to say" (14). Venetian-style "realism" is similarly a Devil's ruse in that it invites not anthropomorphism but also fantasy.

The religious fanatics in Pamuk's novel, including the vociferous Husret Hoja and his lackies lurking in the dark waiting to pounce on their imagined enemies, reject everything they deem "inauthentic." Both coffee and "realism" are new. However, there is a difference between coffee and "realism." Coffee is native to Islam, but "realism" is imported from Europe. Coffee arrived in Islamic lands with Yemeni Sufis, whereas "realism" was imported from European Christians. If coffee, a drink used for devout purposes, should cause so much strife, what would happen if they should find out about European paintings that breathe life into their objects? What the religious fanatics do not see, the novel shows, is the ways in which what they take for granted as authentic is born out of cultural encounters. The art of miniature and the skills of the miniaturist come from all over the world. Enishte's favorite pupil and nephew Black has traveled around the Muslim lands, such as Safavid Persia and Herat, and worked with miniature masters along the way. Many details of their style and skill come from Mongols, especially their prized red color. This global past of Ottoman miniatures highlights the absurdity of the dispute around coffee and the Venetian style of representation, and of the fear and violence a new thing, idea, perspective, or technique should generate on the ground of authenticity.

The national and cosmopolitan impulses behind Arabic and Turkish narratives, and I refer specifically to Mahfouz and Pamuk, do have one concern in common. They interrogate the paradoxical omnipotence of the Sultan (both fictional and historical) and expose the pervasive tyranny of these God-like figures as well as their inefficacy in managing the quotidian minutiae of living. They cannot control what goes on in the coffeehouses. The sexual excesses of their subjects become potent symbols of resistance to, and modes of escape from, tyranny. Homosexuality in a homosocial male-oriented public world of the coffeehouse, as Husret Hoja unwittingly reveals

in his condemnation, escapes both political and religious censorship. Coffee, perhaps because of its potency, has been associated with sexuality and sexual desire from the outset, and the coffeehouse in the Middle East with clandestine daring-dos, including hashish smoking and picture storytelling, which in Islamic discourses incite passion and make men lose control of their mental faculties.

Coffee is seen as equally erotic and subversive in contemporary Japan and Taiwan. It is associated with homosexuality in Zhu Tianwen's *Notes of a Desolate Man* (1994) and Oedipal sexual desire in Murakami Haruki's *Kafka on the Shore* (2002). The events of Zhu's novel unfold on a world stage during the height of the AIDS epidemic against the backdrop of a rigid heterosexual moral universe in Taiwan. The world of the unnamed homosexual protagonist is filled with repressed or unfulfilled sexual desire. As he remembers his first love, Ah-Yao, who is dying of AIDS in Japan, he recounts his love affairs and travels in Taiwan, Japan, and Italy (and the cinemas of these countries). He meets Fido, one of his young objects of desire, in a coffeehouse. "When the coffee arrived, Fido looked at me, waiting for orders," the narrator remembers. "I just focused on the cup of iced coffee, overflowing with whipped cream and topped with a cherry; I was half meditating, half nodding, like a man appreciating a work of art," and "I was the lucky one, for I was free to drink in his beauty and youth with my eyes" (69). He would "Sail toward the Mediterranean" to marry Yongjie, and "Our wedding, after all, something Ah Yao didn't know, was held in the biggest church in the world, St. Peter's Basilica, where the Pope resides" is pungent with "[t]he smell of that morning's cappuccino with cinnamon assaults my nose like a hurricane," and plans to "visit Rimini, Fellini's hometown. We'd also go to Venice, Florence, then return to Taiwan before school starts" (46–47). Coffee is an antidote to repression, and the coffeehouse a space where passion finds expression, perhaps even relief, as one finds in the Fellini's films referenced in the novel.

Coffee in Zhu's novel is at first glance European, but the association of coffeehouse with sexuality tells a different story. Coffeehouses in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were meeting places for intellectuals, artists, and political activists, but not so in Japan and Taiwan at the turn of the twentieth century. Japanese-style coffeehouses in Japan and Taiwan, open till the early hours in the morning, were meeting places and pleasure houses for the male cultural elite, where beautiful stewardesses served and Geisha entertained. Even though contemporary coffeehouses are no longer their former pleasure houses, coffee in Japan and Taiwan continues to resonate with the culture of pleasure

houses. It is simultaneously European and Japanese in *Kafka on the Shore*, Murakami's exploration of the impact of repression, and here, of memories of violence in the history of Japan, on three generations of Japanese subjects. The youngest generation is represented by the eponymous Kafka, a fifteen-year-old boy whose father is viciously attacked and killed. The older by his imagined long-lost mother, Miss Saeki, a woman in her 50s who lost her lover to violence during the 1970s university student unrests. And the oldest by Nakata, a man in his 60s who lost his memory as well as speaking and thinking faculties during an American air raid at the end of World War II. In separate but parallel journeys, Kafka and Nakata leave Tokyo for Takamatsu, where Saeki is. Both are runaways on a quest. Kafka runs away from his father and searches for his mother (and sister), while Nakata goes on the run after he kills a cat-killer by the name of Johnnie Walker (or perhaps Kafka's father) and arrives in Takamatsu in search of the "entrance stone" that would help him unlock his memory. Saeki has returned there to run the Komura Memorial Library after a twenty-year absence.

Four characters drink coffee in the novel. Saeki, her transgender assistant, Oshima, a young woman Kafka befriends on a bus and fancies, his sister, Sakura, and Hoshino, a young truck driver who decides to drive Nakata and help him find the "entrance stone." Coffee is associated with Europe and sexuality. Hoshino, a virile man, goes to a coffeehouse several times in Takamatsu in order to listen to Beethoven and Schubert. Oshima drinks coffee out of a flask every morning. Saeki and Sakura are Kafka's imagined mother and sister as well as the objects of his desire in a mock Oedipal plot. Kafka brings Saeki coffee every afternoon, "[a]t two, I take a cup of coffee on a tray up to Miss Saeki's room" (287), falls in love with her, "each time I see her face, see her, it's utterly precious" (290), and has an affair with her in dreamlike episodes. Sakura drinks coffee every time Kafka is around, and he also has an affair with her in a dreamlike episode. Murakami's coffee, like Zhu's, is antidote to repression, and its potency, necessarily represented as exuberant sexual desire, unravels the dark side of forced amnesia, and provides a line of escape from its tyranny. It is like the coffee served in Hitchcock's 1945 murder mystery *Spellbound*, right before the psychoanalytic session in which two psychiatrists, Dr Constance Peters and her mentor Dr Alexander Brulov, begin to unlock the protagonist John Ballantyne's amnesia. This leads to the restoration of his memory and his exoneration from murder. Murakami's novel does not give its protagonist Kafka – who imagines himself to be his father's murderer – this relief. This is, perhaps,

because his memories are too entangled with those of Saeki and Nakata, with the absented memories of war and collective violence in the past.

Coffee and coffeehouses in the five literary works I have discussed are quotidian details in contemporary life, but their history haunts literary worlds. This history of the global circulation of the "dark gold" and of its diverse cultural and social life in different parts of the world connects these literary worlds and gives them their cosmopolitan worldliness. The origin of coffee, whether it is perceived as native or imported, has an impact on how it is deployed in literary texts. The social life of coffee, particularly the coffee-house, in turn leaves a mark on its cultural life. Despite its diversity, it is intriguingly a common site of resistance to repression and oppression. Coffee, as a way of life, and coffeehouse, as a cultural institution, are products of cultural encounter at different historical and geographical junctures and as such each instance also has a unique manifestation. Missing in these works is the politics of production and marketplace. Perhaps this should not be surprising, for these works seem to see from the prism of consumption, of "empire," the Middle East, and East Asia, rather than "colony," Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America. It would be important to bring into discussion the experiences of the "colony" in order to complete the picture of Coffee Road as a "roadmap" for world literature. This said, the two examples explored above suffice to demonstrate the ways in which the Silk Road, as well as Coffee Road, can be productive in generating a new paradigm for world literature.

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3

Arabic Literary Prose, *Adab* Literature, and the Formation of Islamicate Imperial Culture

AHMED H. AL-RAHIM

> Woe unto you, we (the chancellery secretaries) speak on behalf of all empires!
>
> (*Wayḥakum innā ḫuṭabāʾu kulli dawlatin*) – ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib[†]

In the Islamicate world, the Arabic literary tradition of prosaic texts does not begin with the Qurʾān, albeit a text primarily composed in "rhymed prose" of the soothsayers (*saǧʿ*; Beeston 1983; Borg 2009), or Arabic poetry (*šiʿr*), the primeval register of the Arabs (*dīwān al-ʿarab*).[1] Rather, it was invented by a professional class of secretaries (*kuttāb*, sing. *kātib*; Sellheim and Sourdel 1990) within the confines of the chancellery of the Umayyad (r. AH 41–132/AD 661–750) and early ʿAbbāsid empires (r. 132–656/750–1258), respectively, in Damascus, a cosmopolitan Byzantine city the Arabs conquered in 13/634, and in Iraq, where in 145/762 Baghdad was founded in the shadow of Ctesiphon, the ancient royal capital of the Parthian (r. BC 247 – AD 224) and the Sasanian (r. AD 224–651) Persian empires. Nearly half a century after Muḥammad's death in 10/632, the Umayyad dynasty established Arabic as the official language of the burgeoning Islamic imperium, or *Pax Islamica*, largely displacing Greek (in Syria) and Middle Persian (in Iraq and Greater Iran), hitherto the two main administrative languages of the caliphal empire. From the second to the fourth/the eighth to the tenth century, Arabic also served as the linguistic medium – or target language – of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement of

I am pleased to dedicate this chapter to my erstwhile patron, Dr. Stephen Grummon, former Director of the Office of Analysis for Near East and South Asia, US Department of State, who taught me all I know about the American chancellery.

† These were reportedly ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's last words before ʿAbbāsid revolutionaries executed him in the year 132/750 (al-Balāḏurī 2001: 11; the Arabic transliteration follows the rules of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*, with the exception of *aw* and *ay* for diphthongs instead of *au* and *ai*, respectively).

1 On the concept of Islamicate civilization, that is, regions where Muslims were *culturally* dominant, see Hodgson 1974, I: 57–60.

the ancient, "foreign" sciences (*ʿulūm al-awāʾil/al-ʿağam*), above all Greek medicine, philosophy, and science (Gutas 1998), and as the scholastic language of all the Arabo-Islamic religious sciences (*ʿulūm al-ʿarab/al-islāmīya*). From early on, Arabic literary prose was thus the handiwork of a professional secretariat class of predominantly non-Arab (Muslim) tribal clients (*mawālī*, sing. *mawlā*), who were typically of Persian-, Greek-, or Aramaic-speaking backgrounds and who relied, as civil servants, on the patronage of the ruling Arabo-Muslim elite (Crone 1980: 97–200; Mitter 2005). It is in this context of empire building in late antiquity that Arabic was transformed into a literary index (*fihrist*) of civilizational interconnectivity (with ancient Greece, Persia, Sogdia, and India) and thus into a language of "world literature."

World literature here is conceived broadly in terms of the translation and reception of literary works of various forms and genres across the boundaries of language, religion, and empire, thereby creating new literary legacies and genres across these or new boundaries. (Owing to the strict meters and motifs that defined the premodern tradition of Arabic poetry, this translation and reception process largely excluded Greek and Middle Persian poetry.) From this perspective, world literature inaugurates a cyclical process of canon formation (and its deconstruction) – as is apparent, for example, in the twelfth-century AD "European" reception of Arabic philosophical, medical, and scientific literature, mainly through Hebrew translations into the Latin, which led to the "European" Renaissance (Hasse 2016: 3–133).

This chapter addresses how Arabic, besides being the scriptural and liturgical speech of Islam, came to be the dominant language, or lingua franca, of a world empire and its literary heritage, specifically, from the reign of the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd-al-Malik ibn-Marwān (r. 65–86/685–705; Robinson 2007) through the ʿAbbāsid revolution in 132/750, to the reign of the caliph Abū-Ğaʿfar al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775). To answer this question, one must first consider the bureaucratic history of the Umayyad dynasty (Hawting 2000: 58–89) – a history from which Arabic literary prose as distinct from qurʾānic prosaic and oratory style emerged.[2] Second, one must ask how the Graeco-Persian political and literary heritage, from which (Umayyad) prose epistolography, namely the *risāla* (Arazi and Ben-Shammai 1995; Hämeen-Anttila 2006), emerged, formed, and transformed the genres and subgenres with which *adab* literature became associated. The chapter is divided into two sections, with the first subdivided into three subsections

2 For a survey of the development of classical Arabic prose literature, see Leder and Kilpatrick 1992, and al-Musawi 2006.

examining the professional and literary careers of three chancellery secretaries of the late Umayyad empire, namely, Sālim Abū-l-ʿAlāʾ, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib, and Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ, who for a short period also served the early ʿAbbāsid dynasty. These subsections additionally address how their literary contributions and translations forged a new style of Arabic written prose and laid the foundations for the rise of *adab* literature – works through which ensuing translations became part of a corpus of premodern world literature. The second section of the chapter provides a brief survey of the genres and subgenres of *adab* literature as well as the problem of their classification in the Arabic literary tradition.

In the history of Arabic literary prose, the Umayyad period is generally associated with the art of oration or prosaic speech (*ḫiṭāba*), less so with the written prose (*kitāba*) or the Arabic codex (*kitāb*; Sellheim 1986). The oratory prose of, among others, the caliph, prefect, general, judge (*qāḍī*), and preacher (*ḫaṭīb*) in Umayyad public life – particularly their use of rhyme and parallelism – directly influenced the development of written Arabic literary prose forms (Beeston 1983; Serjeant 1983; Qutbuddin 2019: 41–42, 406–31). Setting aside the composite question of the oral and the written in early Islam (Zwettler 1978: 41–97; Schoeler 2006; Qutbuddin 2019: 21–63), the earliest datable literary prose in Arabic, extant mainly in the epistolary form, is postliminary to the fiscal, administrative, and military reforms of the caliph ʿAbd-al-Malik, who, in or around the year 78/697, began replacing Greek, Middle Persian (or Pahlavi), and Coptic with Arabic as the official language of the Umayyad chancellery (*dīwān ar-rasāʾil*) and the state civil and military registers (*dīwān al-ʿaṭāʾ wa-l-ǧund*; al-Duri 1991; al-Qāḍī 2010), withal minting Islamic types of coinage (Bacharach 2014: 19–22).[3] All civil servants were then required to know Arabic, though initially knowledge of one or more of the former administrative languages was also expected. It was the secretariat class that implemented the administrative language reforms, including translating the archives of the chancellery into Arabic (al-Qāḍī 2014: 143–44). Secretaries, especially early on after the Arab conquests, came from the ranks of the protected religious minorities (*ahl aḏ-ḏimma*; e.g., John of Damascus [d. AD 749], who served a number of Umayyad caliphs, including ʿAbd-al-Malik; Sahas 1972: 17–48), some of whom had converted to Islam. Apart from the role they played as native informants, these secretaries were trained and versed in, *inter alia*, Arabic grammar, philology, lexicography, poetry, the Qurʾān, histories of the

3 On Islamic identity formation under the reign of ʿAbd-al-Malik, see van Ess 1991, I: 9–11.

prophets and kings, and geography – subject matters, in other words, that came to comprise the "disciplines of *adab*" (*al-ʿulūm al-adabīya*; Heinrichs 1995: 199–200). Some of these state functionaries were, moreover, required to know arithmetic and to study economic management, mainly for the purpose of administration and taxation of agricultural goods (*ḫarāǧ*; Watson 1983: 123–38; Morony 1984: 27–124) belonging to non-Muslim and Muslim subjects of the empire. This versatility also served the more humanistic end of cultivating habits of urbane etiquette and refined civility (*adab*) that, first, functioned as the hallmark of being admitted as a boon companion (*nadīm*) into the imperial courts of the late Umayyads and early ʿAbbāsids and, second, was an important remunerated cultural distinction necessary for tutoring princes and other members of the royal household. One who acquired such character traits (*aḫlāq*), or a humanistic habitus, was commonly known as a "belletrist" (*adīb)* or a "worldly man of letters," or even a "dandy" (*ẓarīf*, a type of *adīb*; Montgomery 2002). The enacting of these Umayyad reforms constituted perhaps the greatest impetus for the literary development of Arabic prose as a medium for the Islamic sciences and as the target language of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement under the ʿAbbāsid caliphate; Arabic thus effectively became the lingua franca of science, philosophy, and literary culture in the medieval Mediterranean world.

The creation of the Islamicate *adab* literary tradition, particularly as it relates to professional codes of conduct or ethics, is also inexorably linked to the professional identity formation of the bureaucratic and scholarly guilds (*ṣināʿāt*, sing. *ṣināʿa*), including, formatively and above all, that of the secretaries (al-Qāḍī 2014), then the judges (*quḍā*, sing. *qāḍī*; Schneider 1990), philosophers (*ḥukamāʾ*, sing. *ḥakīm*; *falāsifa*, sing. *faylasūf*), physicians (*aṭibbāʾ*, sing. *ṭabīb*; Reisman 2004), theologians (*mutakallimūn*, sing. *mutakallim*; van Ess 1991–92), jurisconsults (*fuqahāʾ*, sing. *faqīh*), muftīs, *ḥadīṯ* traditionalists (*muḥaddiṯūn*, sing. *muḥaddiṯ*), and poets (*šuʿarāʾ*, sing. *šāʿir*). After the period of the (Sunnī) Rightly Guided Caliphs (*al-ḫulafāʾ ar-rāšidūn*; r. 11–40/632–661), whose religio-politics was largely dominated by Arabian tribalism (Chabbi 1997), this professional formation begins with the chancellery secretaries and the resumption of Byzantine and Sasanian imperial statecraft and ideology, as well as the appropriation of Graeco-Hellenic and Persian literary and civic cultures (Morony 1984: 507–26; Gutas 1998, 11–60; Crone 2004, 145–96; Marsham 2009: 81–182). *Adab* as a form of societal and individual habitus, that is, inculcated dispositions and skills in the soul (*nafs*), finds a cultural and literary background in the Graeco-Hellenic and the Sasanian Middle Persian "mirrors for princes" (*Fürstenspiegel*) traditions, of practical politics, civility,

and courtly *savoir faire* (Knauth 1975; Daiber 2015); it may also be traced to the Greek cultural concepts of *paideia* (*adab*) and *paideusis* (*taʾdīb*), namely, the cultivation of certain habits in and education of the ideal citizen of a polis, including instruction in such subject matters as grammar, rhetoric, music, mathematics, philosophy, geography, history, and gymnastics (Werner 1943–45; Marrou 1956: 243–45, 527–28; cf. Brown 1984; Kraemer 1992: 9–11, 231–33). In the Graeco-Roman world, the civilizing process of *paideia*, like that of *adab* in Islamicate polities, consists of a system of formal and informal education, most often of elites, intended to create, through theory and praxis, an ordered citizenry (cf. Elias 2000, *passim*). The discipline of *paideia* regulates and, by observing the golden mean, sets the norms of cultural etiquette, power relations, and codes for social behavior among different classes and interest groups – from the king to the philosopher to the cobbler.

Historically, the cultural transformation of Greek *paideia* into Arabic *adab* began early after the Arab conquests of the eastern lands of the Byzantine empire (Greater Syria and Egypt) with the cultural assimilation of Greek-speaking functionaries into the Umayyad dynasty, to run the chancellery. In a similar vein, *paideia* in late antiquity was also closely tied to educating a ruling class and bureaucracy, paralleling in this respect the rise of Islamicate *adab* as a form of professional and cultural ethics of the chancellery secretaries and their guild.

Sālim Abū-l-ʿAlāʾ and *Sirr al-Asrār* ("Secret of Secrets")

Sālim ibn-ʿAbdallāh Abū-l-ʿAlāʾ (fl. 65–125/685–744), an Umayyad secretary, believed to be of Persian heritage, played a formative role in the invention of Arabic literary prose (Grignaschi 1965–66, 1967; Latham 1983: 155–65; al-Qāḍī 2019: 209–16). He trained in the Damascene chancellery during the caliphate of ʿAbd-al-Malik and likely tutored his son, the caliph Hišām ibn-ʿAbd-al-Malik (r. 105–125/724–743), whose chancellery Sālim headed. The sustained reign of Hišām brought to fruition his father's reforms, which involved the near complete Arabicization (*taʿrīb*) of the administrative apparatus, including the state civil and army register, laying the bureaucratic and, in some respects, military foundations of the ʿAbbāsid empire that was to come (Blankinship 1994: 77–96; al-Qāḍī 2010). Sālim is reported to have been present at Hišām's death and dispatched as the herald to inform the crown prince, al-Walīd (II) ibn-Yazīd (r. 125–126/743–744), of his succession to the caliphal throne – an indication of Sālim's influence during Hišām's reign. While Sālim appears to have been retained as the chief secretary, his own son, ʿAbdallāh

ibn-Sālim, became a secretary to the caliph al-Walīd II. Hišām's reign ushered in at least three enduring literary developments in the history of the Arabic language and its development as a language of world literature: first, the (relative) standardization of literary Arabic prose narrative, stylistic features of which were based on the Arabo-Islamic oratory tradition; second, the reception and influence of Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit literatures on Arabic (Bosworth 1983; Gutas 1998: 11–16), including the Arabic translations and literary redactions associated with the Graeco-Hellenic (and Middle Persian) "epistolary cycle between Aristotle and Alexander [the Great]" that contributed to the emergence of Arabic epistolography (van Bladel 2004; Maróth 2006: 1–149; Gutas 2009: 60–65);[4] and third, the rise of the literatures of *adab* and with these Islamicate imperial culture.

As rulers of the former Byzantine and Sasanian domains, the Umayyad Arab aristocracy undertook to instruct its caliphs and princes in the codes of ethical conduct, particularly with respect to employing religio-political power and statecraft. It was with a view to these exigencies that Sālim directed and redacted (*aṣlaḥa*) Arabic translations (evidently and mainly from Pahlavi) of material derived from the Graeco-Persian "mirrors for princes" genre in the form of missives purportedly exchanged between Aristotle and his student Alexander the Great during the Macedonian king's conquest of eastern Persia (Grignaschi 1975; Maróth 2006: 10–34; Gutas 2009: 64–70). This pseudo-Aristotelian compilation, which the fourth-/tenth-century bibliographer Ibn-an-Nadīm descriptively titles *Rasāʾil Arisṭāṭālīs ilā l-Iskandar* ("Aristotle's Epistles to Alexander"), consisting of seven epistles from the longer version of the cycle, concerns the general principles of governing (*as-siyāsa al-ʿāmmīya*; Grignaschi 1975: 33–287) as well as aspects of, *inter alia*, Greek philosophy and cosmology. By the end of the fourth/tenth century, this epistolary compilation, extant in a short and long version, would come to be known under another title, that of *Sirr al-asrār* ("Secret of Secrets"; hereafter *Sirr*; Manzalaoui 1971; Grignaschi 1975: 97–197; Maróth 2006: 85–133). It would over the next few centuries be augmented with additional Hellenistic and Persian material translated into Arabic and adapted to an expanding Islamicate cultural milieu (withal its later Latin and vernacular transmission in the West; Grignaschi 1980, 1982).[5]

4 For the Arabic edition of the entire "epistolary cycle," see Maróth 2006: 1–149; and for a critical review of the latter and the secondary literature, descriptions of the manuscripts, earlier partial editions and translations, and a summary of the contents of the "cycle," see Gutas 2009.

5 On the *Sirr*'s influence on early Islamic theology and for a literature review, see van Ess 1992, II: 410–11.

The *Sirr* is the earliest specimen both of the voluminous mirrors literature (Bosworth 1988; Gutas 1990: 355–62) and of encyclopaedism in Arabic literary tradition (Gutas 2006).

The *Sirr*'s two main sections address the general principles of governing and state administration (*tadbīr al-mulk*), furnishing pragmatic political advice to the king on how to morally comport himself so as to achieve his military and political objectives, organize his government, and direct his ministers, secretaries, ambassadors, governors, and generals. It includes also a sermon attributed to Plato (*ḫuṭbat Aflāṭūn*; Maróth 2006: 40–42), Aristotle's "Golden" epistle (*aḏ-ḏahabīya*; Maróth 2006: 108–30) on the nature of the world and an ordered summary (*tartīb*) of the various branches of Graeco-Hellenistic knowledge, ranging from political astrology, astronomy, medicine, and hygiene to alchemy, magic, talismans, physiognomy, onomancy (see Figure 3.1; Burnett 1988), and herbal and lapidary lore, as well as an epistle by Alexander to his mother regarding his imminent death, followed by gnomologia lamenting the Macedonian king's passing (Grignaschi 1993; Gutas 2009: 61–63).

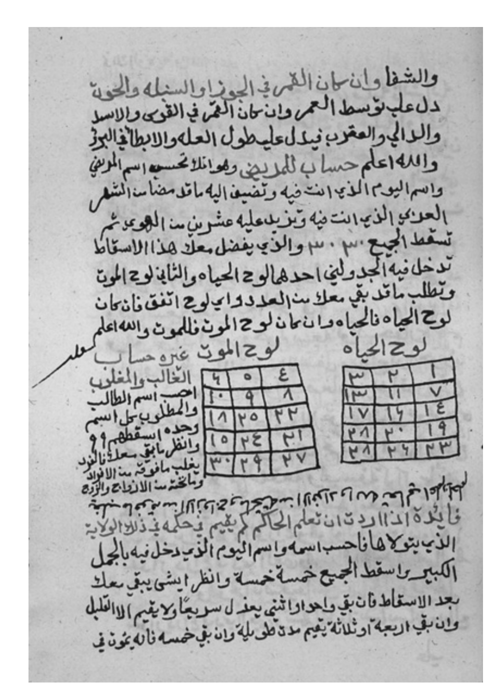


Figure 3.1 Table (*lawḥ*) for determining whether a patient will live or die based on the numerical value of his name, *Kitāb Sirr al-asrār*, US National Medical Library, Bethesda NLMed. MS A 57, fol. 7[a], dated Raǧab 1264/June 1848.

The *Sirr*, in its short and long form, was translated into Latin, respectively, in the twelfth and the thirteenth century AD (the latter translation consists of ten sections under the title *Secretum secretorum*; Williams 2003: 29–30; Zonta 2003). Both translations are extant in more than 450 manuscripts, some with commentaries and glosses, including one by Roger Bacon (d. AD 1292), who produced a manuscript edition with an introduction and explanatory notes (Williams 1994). Read as an encyclopaedic mirror for princes, the *Sirr* was translated from the Latin into numerous European vernaculars (Ryan and Schmitt 1982, *passim*; Gaullier-Bougassas, Bridges, and Tilliette 2015: *passim*), including English (Manzalaoui 1977; Kavey 2007), French, German (Forster 2006), Italian, Castilian, Catalan, Portuguese, and Czech, and from the Hebrew translation into Russian. The *Sirr* is thus one of the most widely disseminated works of medieval Arabic literature, or the *adab* tradition, whose translation and literary reception history constitutes one of the most intricate transmission events of world literature in the Middle Ages.

ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib and *Risāla ilā l-Kuttāb* ("Epistle to the Secretaries")

Another such Umayyad secretary to be considered as one of the progenitors of Arabic literary prose, specifically of Arabic epistolography, is ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd ibn-Yaḥyā al-ʿĀmirī al-Kātib (d. *ca.* 132/750; Schönig 1985; al-Qāḍī 2005, 2014).[6] ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd contributed to the development of *adab* literature, particularly in defining the literary education and professional ethics of the secretariat guild, whom he describes as the masters of *adab* (*ahl al-adab*; ʿAbbās 1988: 281). Born a Muslim, likely of Persianate cultural background, in al-Anbār, part of the western region of Iraq, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's first vocation appears to have been that of peripatetic teacher and private tutor in al-Kūfa, a flourishing Iraqi garrison town known for its philologists, orators, and anthologists of pre-Islamic poetry, with whom he appears, formatively, to have come into contact. Around the year 86/705, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd moved to Damascus, the metropole of the Umayyad empire, where the caliph ʿAbd-al-Malik's irreversible Arabicization reforms of the imperial institutions of administrative finance were in effect (and inaugurated a social process that led to the Arabization of much the Middle East and North Africa). ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd trained as a chancellery scribe and then secretary (*kātib*; whence his professional title) with the aforementioned literary editor of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Sirr*, Sālim Abū-l-ʿAlāʾ, who

6 For editions and translations of ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's works, see al-Qāḍī 2005: 3; 2009: 6–7.

became his professional mentor as well as a relative-in-law. Promoted from the ranks of the Umayyad bureaucracy, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd served under his mentor as a secretary to the caliph Hišām ibn-ʿAbd-al-Malik and later as the head of the chancellery of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān II ibn-Muḥammad (r. 127–132/744–749), who ruled not from Damascus but the new capital Ḥarrān (ancient Carrhae), in Upper Mesopotamia. Before that, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd served Marwān II, to whom he appears to have been close, during his governorship of Armenia and Azerbaijan (Canard, Cahen, and Deny 1960). Portrayed in literary biography as the ever-faithful secretary, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd is reported to have declined the caliph's offer to desert him when the end of the Umayyad dynasty was nigh. Instead, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd perished alongside his royal patron at the hands of the revolutionaries who established the ʿAbbāsid imperial caliphate in the year 132/750. The period of ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's civil service to the first dynasty of Islam consequently spanned nearly the entire period of Umayyad Arabicization and Islamization reforms – a bureaucratic process to which he was essential, thus playing a formative role in determining the literary character of the language of the Arabs and its letters.

Of ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's *œuvre*, which in a fourth-/tenth-century compilation apparently filled a thousand folios, only a fraction is extant today (al-Qāḍī 2005: 3; 2019: 208–9); of that, apart from ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's official and personal correspondences, there are two treatises that sealed his reputation among *adab* littérateurs as the historical father of Arabic literary prose and epistolography. The first is titled *Risāla ilā l-Kuttāb* ("Epistle to the Secretaries"; hereafter *Risāla*; ʿAbbās 1988: 281–88; Schönig 1985: 116–21; al-Qāḍī 2019) and concerns the professional, ethical, and literary formation of the secretariat professional class. It is the earliest treatise to define the genre of handbooks, or *enchiridia*, of professional ethics or "good habits" of conduct (*ādāb*, the plural of *adab*) in the Arabic tradition. As such, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's *Risāla*, building on the Sasanian and Byzantine literary and practical political traditions of statecraft, evidently established the secretaries as the first professionally and ethically administered guild in the Islamicate world (Bosworth 1990). While other intellectual and professional associations (such as, for example, the physicians) manifestly, albeit informally, existed before or alongside the secretaries during the Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid period, it was through the professional and literary efforts of ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd and his mentor, Sālim, that the secretaries historically became the *primus inter pares* to establish themselves as a guild or professional class within early Islamicate societies.

In his synoptic *Risāla*, whose audience, as the title indicates, is the body corporate of the chancellery secretaries or its guild members (*maʿšar al-kuttāb*

or *ahl hāḏihi ṣ-ṣināʿa*, respectively), ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd sets forth with some urgency – an urgency that may only be understood in the context of empire building – the requirements for consolidating the corporate identity of the secretariat profession, first, by formalizing a code of professional ethics, adumbrating the guild's commendable virtues (such as forbearance, deliberation, generosity, honor, loyalty, temperance in all things) and blameworthy vices (including calumny, arrogance, prodigality, luxury, excess in all forms), and, second, by delineating the boundaries of the secretarial profession from those of other guilds (*ṣunūf aṣ-ṣināʿāt*). He inventories, in effect, the curriculum of the literary arts and religious sciences a secretary was required to master, including Arabic grammar, language or lexicography, poetry, penmanship, and epistolography, the Qurʾān and the religious duties of Islam, political histories of the prophets and kings, and, for financial secretaries, accountancy and economics (the latter being a "foreign" science). ʿAbd-al -Ḥamīd's tone in the *Risāla* is prospective. He argues for a single occupational, corporate identity that is shared throughout the ages among past, present, and future secretaries, and mandates cordiality if not affection among all secretaries: "For God's sake, love one another in your guild!" (*taḥābbū fī llāhi ʿazza wa-ǧalla fī ṣināʿatikum*; ʿAbbās 1988: 283).

Later handbooks of professional ethics often provide hagiographies of their eponymous founders, in the case of Islamic legal schools (*maḏāhib*, sing. *maḏhab*), and genealogies of ancient authorities, such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in the Nestorian Christian translator Ḥunayn ibn-Isḥāq's (d. 260/873) *Ādāb al-falāsifa* ("*Ādāb* of the Philosophers") and Hippocrates and Galen in Isḥāq ibn-ʿAlī ar-Ruhāwī's (fl. 256/870) *Adab aṭ-ṭabīb* ("*Adab* of the Physicians"; cf. al-Rahim 2018: 15–23). However, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd does not discuss the history of Byzantine bureaucracy or that of the bygone Persian empires. Instead, he presents the authority and history of chancellery secretaries as being synonymous with state and empire. The *Risāla*, all the same, establishes a universal history beginning with the "creation" and extending into the author's own era in addition to a cosmological hierarchy that ranks the kings (or as the case may be the caliphs) between God and an extensive retinue of secretaries (*maʿšar al-kuttāb*). The latter are the civil servants (*ḫadam*, sing. *ḫādim*) who execute the king's orders and manage the affairs of his dominion. The secretaries, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd writes, are thus "the ears with which kings hear, the eyes with which they see, the tongues with which they speak, and the hand with which they strike" (ʿAbbās 1988: 281–82; al-Qāḍī 2014: 146–47). In this respect, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's *Risāla* serves as a "mirror for secretaries," confirming their relation to kingship and establishing the

principles of chancellorship. The *Risāla* thus laid the literary foundations for a long tradition of handbooks on the educational formation of secretaries (*adab al-kātib*) that extends into early modernity, including most significantly for the development of this genre that of the ʿAbbāsid chancellery secretary ʿAbdallāh ibn-Muslim Ibn-Qutayba (d. 276/889; Lowry 2005). Moreover, for Islamicate intellectual history, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's *Risāla* appears to have impelled other scholarly communities, as they competed for state patronage, to formalize their guilds by instituting their own handbooks of professional ethics (*ādāb*) to govern the conduct of their respective members (al-Rahim forthcoming).

ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's second major treatise, a mirror for a certain prince, is titled *ʿAhd Marwān ilā ibnihi ʿUbaydallāh*, or alternatively titled *Risālat ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib fī naṣīḥat walī-l-ʿahd* ("Marwān's Oath to His Son ʿUbaydallāh," or "ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib's Epistle on Advising the Crown Prince"; hereafter *ʿAhd*; ʿAbbās 1988: 215–65; al-Qāḍī 2005; 8-9; 2019: 232–302). ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd wrote this epistle at the behest of the Umayyad caliph Marwān II, and apparently on his behalf, to his son and heir apparent, ʿUbaydallāh. Like the pseudo-Aristotelian *Sirr* associated with Sālim, the *ʿAhd* provides moral and religio-political counsel to the prince (who was never to become caliph), in addition to advising on such matters as warfare and military tactics, troop deployments and weapons, and espionage. Regarding the history of the "mirrors for princes" genre in Arabic, the innovation of ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's epistle lies in its literary appropriation of what seem to have been Arabic translations and summaries of Greek and Middle Persian texts on practical politics. The *ʿAhd*, next to the pseudepigraphical *Sirr*, appears, then, to be the earliest authored mirror for princes in the Arabic literary tradition. The epistle illustrates how the translation and cultural adaptation of a literary tradition, in this case the Graeco-Persian mirrors for princes (a genre of world literature if ever there was one), transformed Arabic, hitherto the *koine* of poetry, oratory, and qurʾānic scripture of the Arabs (Zwettler 1978: 41–188; Qutbuddin 2019), into the literary prose of a language of world literature in the Middle Ages.

While the translations of the *Sirr* exemplify how a text enters world literature, the early Graeco-Syriac and Persian translations into Arabic conversely show how these translated texts of world literature in turn contributed to the creation of Arabic literary prose. This process becomes especially apparent in ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's *ʿAhd*; ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's epistolary prose exhibits, while adapting oratory prose, the use of highly selective

diction (*ġarīb*) coupled with an assiduous philological understanding of the lexical and morphological characteristics of the Arabic language, such as parallelism and cadence, in addition to religio-political and qurʾānic themes (as shown, for example, in ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's Islamic arguments for bolstering Umayyad caliphal authority against Qādarite and Ḫāriǧite theological doctrines of freewill and extreme pious egalitarianism, respectively; Crone and Hinds 1986, *passim*; van Ess 1991, I: 65–147; al-Qāḍī 2019: 216–18, 255–302). Similar to the beginning formulae of Islamic sermons, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's epistles open with glorifying and praising God (*taḥmīd*), and commending God's providential selection of Muḥammad as his messenger (the mission *topos*) as well as God's election of a caliph to rule after him; these incipits would then be followed by the formulaic transitional phrase "as to that which follows [this]" (*ammā baʿd*), indicating the subject matter or intended substance of the epistle. Recurring several times throughout the text, the incipits introduced to the epistolary genre a cyclical structure in the form of a refrain. Lastly, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's *ʿAhd* is one of the earliest extant instances of the epistolary genre that transformed the compositional style of Arabic, which hitherto existed either as qurʾānic rhymed and oratory prose, or as the (insipid) bureaucratic prose (*inšāʾ dīwānī*) associated with the caliph ʿAbd-al-Malik's imperial language reforms, into a stylistically innovative prose. Arabic was thus formatively and linguistically fashioned to assimilate the translations of the "foreign" sciences from Greek and Syriac and literary and historical texts from Middle Persian. In short, adapting oratory prose and its formulations to epistolary prose, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd created an expository style that served as a model for the new art (*fann*) of penned Arabic prose and letters – an art form that served the demands of the empire as well as the soul.

Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ and *Kalīla wa-Dimna* ("Kalīla and Dimna")

The formative period of Arabic literary prose and belles lettres includes another conspicuous chancellery secretary, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ, Rūzbih (ʿAbdallāh, his Muslim name after converting) ibn-Dādūya, who straddles the end of the Umayyad and beginning of the ʿAbbāsid period (Latham 1998; Cooperson 2005). During the latter epoch, dating from the mid-second /eighth to the seventh/thirteenth centuries and commonly designated the classical age of Arabic literature, a large array of new genres emerged, coupled with a prodigious record of literary production in nearly all domains

of the arts and sciences as well as of religion and philosophy. Born around 102/720 in the province of Fārs (later known as Fīrūzābad) to a family of landed nobility who had served as Sasanian administrators, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ was of Persian cultural heritage. His father (also known by a Muslim name, al-Mubārak) served in Iraq as an Umayyad bureaucrat and tax collector. The father was nicknamed al-Muqaffaʿ ("the crippled"), apparently after being brutally tortured for misappropriations; this nickname (along with its history) would come to be identified with the son (*ibn*) in the Arabic literary tradition. Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ, like his father, reportedly converted late in life to Islam, probably from Manichaeism. Quoting fragments of a Manichean apologia and parodic verses of qurʾānic style ascribed to him (the latter texts appear to be authentic; Latham 1990: 72–77; van Ess 1992, II: 29–36), later biographical reports disparage Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's "Muslim" character despite his ostensible conversion to Islam, rendering him as a crypto-Manichean (*zindīq*), a *topos* commonly encountered in Arabic literary biography (cf. al-Rahim 2018: 31–37). Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's Arabic prose style, however, was above anyone's reproach.

Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ studied Arabic grammar, poetry, and the Qurʾān, probably in al-Baṣra, another garrison town that, like al-Kūfa, was famed for its philologists (Bohas, Guillaume, and Kouloughli 1990: 1–8). His significance lies not only in the literary development of Arabic prose but also in the role his Arabic translations and treatises played in preserving Middle Persian Sasanian culture and literature, particularly Persian dynastic histories, which were nearly extinguished in the Arab conquests of the last Persian empire. (These translations of the Pahlavi would later play a role in the reemergence of New Persian epic poetry and prose in, perhaps most importantly, the *Šāh-nāma* ["Book of Kings"] of Abū-l-Qāsim al-Firdawsī [d. 411/1020; Askari 2016], and earlier in the stoking of the anti-Arab sentiments of the Šuʿūbīya, a literary trend emphasizing the piety and cultural superiority of non-Arab converts to Islam in early ʿAbbāsid society, particularly in the third/ninth century [Norris 1990].) Under the Umayyad dynasty, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's bilingualism, along with his mastery of Arabic written prose, a vendible qualification for any would-be chancellery secretary amid the Arabicization reforms, secured him a number of posts in Umayyad Iraq and subsequently in the province of Kirmān, whence he fled on the eve of the ʿAbbāsid revolution. An account of how ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd met his end with the fall of the Umayyad dynasty connects Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ to the latter: ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd, it is reported, sought refuge with his friend and professional subordinate Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ, only to be discovered and tortured to death by the

revolutionary agents of the ʿAbbāsids. This narrative may be dismissed as hagiographic portraiture further linking the two major progenitors of Arabic literary prose (cf. the "meeting of great minds" *topos*, al-Rahim 2018: 23–24); Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ was in any case spared (for the time being) despite having been a civil servant of the *ancien régime*. He went on to serve two ʿAbbāsid princes in al-Baṣra, ʿIsā and Sulaymān ibn-ʿAlī, both uncles of the second caliph al-Manṣūr, until around the year 139/756, when, finally, he fell out of favor with the caliph al-Manṣūr and reportedly was tortured to death by the new governor of al-Baṣra, Sufyān ibn-Muʿāwiya al-Muhallabī. Thus Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's professional career as chancellery secretary and belletrist (*adīb*) embodies the continuity of bureaucratic and cultural literacy between the Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid caliphal empires, under which the Arabic literary tradition was formed and flourished.

Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's contribution to the formation of *adab* literature lies principally and properly in the literary genre of the mirrors for princes. He is acclaimed for, *inter alia*, his Arabic translation and adaptation of the Perso-Indian mirror for princes, the animal fable *Kalīla wa-Dimna* ("Kalīla and Dimna"), which has been described in perhaps orientalist terms as the literary jewel from India presented to Arabo-Islamic civilization (Brockelmann 1990; de Blois 1990). Its original Arabic translation from Middle Persian became a literary model of Arabic prose narrative to be emulated, generating countless translations into other world languages. The Middle Persian literary and cultural influence on the Arabic concept of *adab* is attested in fragments of Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's translation of the *Āʾīn-nāma* ("On Comportment"; Tafażżolī 1984; Latham 1990: 54–55). Belonging to a homonymous genre, this Sasanian compendium, apparently lost, addressed the practical ethics of moral conduct, courtly etiquette, and general *savoir faire*. The translation, which Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ likely completed while serving as an Umayyad secretary, reflects the imperial and cultural preoccupations of the Umayyads, later ʿAbbāsids, intent as they were on appropriating and naturalizing the considerable literary traditions of world empires that for centuries before had ruled the Near East, along with the patronage of such translations and portrayals of Sasanian and Byzantine courtly ideals and imperial ideologies (Gutas 1998: 28–60; al-Azmeh 1997, 2014).

A form of political ideology, the *āʾīn*, not unlike the *adab* of the "mirrors for princes" literature in Arabic, seeks to establish a well-ordered imperium whose ruling aristocracy not only exercises power over its subjects but also determines their social and moral conduct within the limits of a stratified class system. Other equivalent Middle Persian

literary and cultural concepts, adapted as *adab* in Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's literary Arabic translations and independent treatises, of which only a fraction has survived, are *andarz* (counsel) and *frahang* (etiquette; *farhang* in New Persian), both connoting correct conduct, custom (similar in meaning to *daʾb* of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, from whose plural, *ādāb*, *adab* is derived; Pellat 1985), proper manners, and social etiquette, that is, proportionality in all actions, including civil and military, by virtue of observing the rule of the golden mean, which is expressed in maxims, admonishments, and practical political advice (Shaked 1987; Marlow 2007; Macuch 2009: 160–72). Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ appears to have written the greater part of his *œuvre* before he became an ʿAbbāsid chancellery secretary, including his translations from Middle Persian, which were known to his senior colleague ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd if not indeed consulted by the latter when composing his own works (al-Qāḍī 2019: 214).

An epitome of the art of translation and world literature, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's literary prose rendition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, extant only in the form of its later Arabic prose redactions, or versions, and in translations, is based on a Middle Persian translation, no longer extant, of a collection of Sanskrit didactic animal fables arranged within the literary technique of a frame story. The Indian archetype, ostensibly intended to cultivate good manners and moral, political conduct in young princes, is posited to have been composed by a Vishnuite Brahman, probably around AD 300, in Kashmir. Its oldest recension is the *Tantrākhyāyika* ("Short Treatise of Stratagems") – in turn the earliest known version of *Pañcatantra* ("Five Treatises"; known in the Middle Ages as the "Fables of Bīdpāy"; de Blois 1990: 1–23; Brinkhaus 2008; Riedel 2011), a celebrated mirror for princes of the Sanskrit literary tradition, parts of which appear to be adaptations of the *Mahābhārata* epic and Buddhist *Jātaka* tales, wherein an Indian king and a philosopher (*bīdpāy*) dialogically examine the nature and ethics of politics and friendship by way of animal fables (see Figure 3.2).

The genesitic story associated with the Middle Persian translation of the Sanskrit *Pañcatantra* is based on the well-attested "king queries the sage" *topos*, familiar to the annalistic universal histories of the Perso-Arabic tradition. Included in the Arabic redactions and the Latin, Hebrew, and Spanish versions of Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's translational adaptation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* – the only direct witness to the Middle Persian translation, apart from the older Syriac rendition of the late sixth century AD – is a prefatory "personal history" of the Sasanian court physician and translator Burzūya. This history illustrates the aforesaid *topos* in abridged form: it recounts how the Sasanian



Figure 3.2 *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris MS Arabe 3467, fol. 98[a], dated from the ninth/ fifteenth century.

king Ḫusraw Anūšīrwān I (r. AD 531–579) became aware of the existence of an Indian book of fables, containing wisdom on how to ethically and morally rule over a kingdom and its subjects, conveyed by anthropomorphized animals similar to those of Aesop's fables. According to the story, the king then mandates his vizier, Buzurgmihr, to dispatch an envoy to India who would secure a copy of the book and translate it from Sanskrit to Pahlavi. The vizier selects Burzūya because, albeit youthful, he is acclaimed for his knowledge of medicine, and dispatches him to India. Dissimulating himself as a "seeker of knowledge," Burzūya is granted access to the treasury of the king of India, from which he copies *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as well as other books. Upon returning from India, Burzūya is celebrated at the court of Anūšīrwān for his translation, to which the "personal history" describing Burzūya's mission to India is appended with Buzurgmihr's notarization (de Blois 1990: 40–60). The last part of this preface, which includes remarks on religious skepticism and an exhortation of asceticism, may have been written by

Burzūya himself but has been ascribed to Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ on account of its Manichean tone, thus leading to additional charges of heterodoxy against him in the Islamic tradition (de Blois 1990: 24–33).

A lively repository of practical political wisdom, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was intended to entertain and edify its audience – adolescents, princes, kings, and philosophers alike. In contrast to the earlier Syriac translation, comprising ten frame-stories, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's Arabic translation appears to have consisted of fifteen didactic fables, framed by a main narrative, in which the translator evidently inserted further substories (de Blois 1990: 12–17). The book's title is a corruption of the Sanskrit names Karaṭaka and Damanaka, referring to the two jackals that feature in the first fable. The initial five fables, or treatises, of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are translations of the Burzūya Middle Persian translation of an early version of the *Pañcatantra*; they concern, *inter alia*, strategies for making friends and keeping them ("The Lion and the Ox" and "The Ring-Dove"), winning the battle of wits in war and peace ("The Owls and the Crows"), and avoiding hasty actions and maintaining judicious worldly conduct ("The Ape and the Tortoise" and "The Ascetic and the Weasel").

The first fable tells the story of the jackal named Dimna, whose malevolent rumors about the loyal ox friend of the lion king leads the lion to kill the ox; to this, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ evidently appended – perhaps with a sense of primordial Manichean justice shared by his Muslim audience – a substory ("The Inquiry into Dimna's Conduct") wherein the jackal is judged and executed for his perfidiousness. The three subsequent animal fables ("The Rat and the Cat," "The King and the Bird," and "The Lion and the Jackal" [see Figure 3.3]), likewise relating to the nature of friendship, moral obligation, and justice, are adapted from the twelfth book of the *Mahābhārata* epic, while the fourth fable ("The King and His Eight Dreams"), on the royal virtue of forbearance, is taken from the ancient Buddhist tales of king Caṇḍa Pradyota. Lastly, fable ten ("The Rat King and His Advisors"), on sagacious ministerial counsel, seems to be of Middle Persian provenance and may have been inserted by Burzūya himself. To these ten stories, all apparently part of Burzūya's Pahlavi translation, four more were appended. Two of them, both of Sanskrit derivation, address the themes of friendship and treachery ("The Traveler and the Goldsmith" and "The Prince and His Comrade"), while the other two ("The Lioness and the Horseman" and "The Ascetic and His Guest"), whose literary origin, Middle Persian or Sanskrit, is yet uncertain, concern wise counsel and moral fatalism of a Manichean variety.



Figure 3.3 *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris MS Arabe 3467, fol. 100^{b}, dated from the ninth/fifteenth century.

The reception of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as a work of *adab* literature among readers and listeners of all social classes, and its many literary adaptations, is not unlike that of the literary reception history of *Alf layla wa-layla* ("A Thousand and One Nights"; Mahdi 1995; Reynolds 2006), which also originated in India. In fact, it is due to its very popularity that Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's Arabic translation itself was textually corrupted, if not entirely lost, in later Arabic redactions and versions; there are more than one hundred Arabic manuscript copies (de Blois 1990: 3–5; Gruendler 2013), at least two prose translations and one metrical version in New Persian, plus an Ottoman Turkish translation (de Blois 1990: 5–7; Omidsalar 2011). Thus, the earliest extant manuscript copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, dating from the early seventh/thirteenth century, about 500 years after Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's translation, render many stories expanded or developed with substories. Withal, the entangled reception history of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* complex of texts is all too evident

when considering the diverse linguistic, cultural, and religious contexts involved in its (re)translations and (re)adaptations into more than forty languages spanning several continents and the period from the Middle Ages to modernity.[7] One of the most disseminated works of premodern world literature, much like the pseudo-Aristotelian *Sirr*, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was translated twice directly from the Arabic into Hebrew; once again into Syriac; and into Greek, Latin, and Castilian (commissioned by Alfonso the Wise, the King of Castile, in the thirteenth century AD). From another widely disseminated Hebrew translation of the thirteenth century AD, it was then again translated into Latin and, at the beginning of the fifteenth century AD, into the European vernaculars, including German, Danish, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and English (Cooperson 2005: 155). In the nineteenth century, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* returned to the Indian subcontinent in both a Hindi and a Bengali translation. Thus, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's Arabic translation of the Pahlavi of the Sanskrit *Pañcatantra* and other texts, similar to the *Sirr* before it, which emerged from and subsequently shaped the Graeco-Hellenic "mirrors for princes" genre, illustrates how world literature in translation transformed Arabic from a poetic and scriptural *koine* into a literary language of global repute.

Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's two other key works of *adab* may also be described as mirrors for princes. The first, *Kitāb Ādāb al-kabīr* ("The Comprehensive Book of Moral Comportment"; hereafter *Ādāb*; Latham 1990: 57–64), a paraenetic *adab* treatise addressed to courtiers and princes, concerns such matters of conduct as self-decorum, behavior in keeping with suavity and propriety, the importance of the art of eloquence, and the cultivation of friendship as well as the cardinal virtues associated with maintaining it. The *Ādāb* ends with Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's description of the virtuous ideal man. Like ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's *Risāla*, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's *Ādāb* also expands on the Sasanian literary and practical political traditions of statecraft, namely, the *āʾīn* and *andarz* (rules of etiquette, particularly as applied at the royal court), in keeping with the cultivation of an Islamic imperial culture. Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ's treatise provides one of the earliest treatments of *adab* as a continuation and synthesis of the Graeco-Persian "mirrors for princes" tradition (Daiber 2015); however, the *Ādāb* does not – except perhaps by implication – define *adab* as a second-order literary category with respect to establishing a genre or typology of Arabic

7 For a comprehensive global study of the transmission and reception history of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, see Beatrice Gruendler, *Kalīla and Dimna*–AnonymClassic, 2018–2022, Fachbereich Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften, Freie Universität Berlin, www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/kalila-wa-dimna.

literature. (Scholastic definitions of *adab*, often in contrast to the concept of knowledge [ʿ*ilm*; Rosenthal 1970: 240–77], would be formatively propounded by the "father of Arabic prose," ʿAmr ibn-Baḥr al-Ǧāḥiẓ [d. 255/868–69; Toorawa 2004; Montgomery 2005].)

The second treatise, *Risāla fī ṣ-Ṣaḥāba* ("On Companionage"; hereafter *Ṣaḥāba*; Latham 1990: 64–72), is an epistle composed after the ʿAbbāsid revolution. Here, Ibn-al-Muqaffaʿ, perhaps at the behest of the aforesaid patron, ʿIsā ibn-ʿAlī, offers advice to the second ʿAbbāsid caliph, al-Manṣūr, on such affairs of the state as agrarian taxes, regional political and economic policy, and military and judicial administration; and, perhaps most intrepidly, he offers further advice on how to establish an Islamic state creed to promulgate the caliph's religio-political omnipotence, with the purpose of fending off heretical groups. (In the spirit of this policy recommendation, al-Manṣūr's great-grandson, the caliph al-Maʾmūm [r. 198–218/813–833], would later adopt as an official state doctrine the creed of the createdness of the Qurʾān in his institution of the *miḥna*, or inquisition [Nawas 2015].) One may thus argue that the literary form and style of both treatises restates many of the moral and practical political lessons told in the fables of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*; however, the *Ādāb* is written as a handbook on the refinement of manners and learning well-suited to the courtly culture of an emerging imperium, while the *Ṣaḥāba* is an epistle of prescriptive policy advice, or, in effect, a memorandum, to the caliph of that imperium (Goitein 1949).

Adab Literature and Literary Genre

It has been argued that rather than being a genre, *adab* is an approach, or literary disposition, to writing or a particular subject matter, perhaps even a humanistic one (Makdisi 1990; Schöller 2001), whose functional aesthetics is directed at an audience seeking to be culturally urbane (Kilpatrick 1988: 56; Heinrichs 1993: 130; Orfali 2012: 29–32). Nevertheless, attempts have been made from both within and without the Arabic tradition to define the genres and subgenres of *adab* literature – though there is little consensus on its composition as a whole or agreement on its individual components (Horst 1987: 208–9; Bonebakker 1990; Fähndrich 1990), because of its diffuseness as a literary rubric. Notwithstanding these literary complexities, this chapter has shown how some of the political exigencies of prior moments of empire building, transregional literary and cultural interaction, as well as translation and appropriation of "world literatures" of Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit heritage fashioned Arabic prose into the literary language of an Islamic

imperium. The emergence of *adab* as an expansive literary category serving to articulate the cultural grammar of Islamicate civilization may be traced to the professional and literary activity of the three Umayyad chancellery secretaries discussed herein (Hämeen-Anttila 2014). Working within two genres of "world literature," expressly, the *Fürstenspiegel* and handbooks of professional ethics, these chancellery secretaries generated the earliest literary configurations of *adab* literature.

The subjects or branches of knowledge encountered in *adab* literature include penmanship, Arabic grammar, epistolography, lexicography, poetry, qurʾānic and *ḥadīṯ* studies, doxography and gnomology, rhetoric, mathematics, (some) theology and philosophy, natural sciences, ethics, geography, biography and history, and music. *Adab* literature also includes a wide range of forms and genres: administrative literature and mirrors for princes (Bosworth 1990), encyclopaedism (Kilpatrick 1982), belletristic anthologies of poetry and prose (on a particular theme; Hámori 2007; e.g., "knowledge," Rosenthal 1970: 252–77), didactic handbooks of etiquette, codes of conduct, and professional ethics and guild specialization, paraenetic collections of aphorisms and wisdom literature (Gutas 1975), miscellany of "dictation notes" (*amālī*), and an Arabic prosimetric genre of short narratives, the *maqāmāt*, in which rhetorical ornateness is conspicuous, pioneered by Badīʿ-az-Zamān al-Hamaḏānī (d. 398/1007; Beeston 1990; Hämeen-Anttila 2002; Stewart 2006). This literature addresses matters related to the cultivation of etiquette, courtly manners and virtues, civility, and professional specialization, ethics, and morality of nearly all categories of society and pursuits, including kings and princes (*naṣīḥat al-mulūk*; Marlow 2007), Arabs and Persians (*ādāb al-ʿarab wa-l-furs*; Grignaschi 1969, 1973), viziers and the boon companion (*ādāb al-wuzarāʾ wa-n-nadīm*; Zaman 2002; and Sadan 1993; Zakeri 2007: 150–58, respectively), state secretaries and functionaries, judges and muftīs (*ādāb al-qāḍī wa-l-muftī*; Masud 2007 and 2008), physicians and philosophers (*ādāb aṭ-ṭabīb wa-l-falāsifa*), mystics and chivalrous boys (*ādāb aṣ-ṣūfīya wa-l-futuwwa*; Ohlander 2009; Zakeri 1995, respectively), instructors and pupils (*ādāb al-muʿallimīn wa-ṭ-ṭullāb*), wives and husbands (*adab an-nikāḥ*), consorts and lovers (*adab al-ǧimāʿ*), concubines and singing slave girls (*ādāb al-ǧawārī wa-l-qiyān*), friends and foes (*ādāb al-aṣḥāb*), chefs and diners (*adab aṭ-ṭabḫ wa-l-akl wa-š-šurb*), even chess players and gamblers (*ādāb aš-šaṭranǧ wa-l-qimār*; Rosenthal 1975).

While the question of classifying the genres and subgenres of *adab* literature may be problematic, it remains certain that the early formation of *adab* literature is inextricably linked to the endeavors of Umayyad and early

ʿAbbāsid chancellery secretaries and their reception of the literary traditions of Middle Persian and the Graeco-Hellenistic world (Yarshater 1988; van Bladel 2010). All the same, *adab* as a form of habitus or civilizing process embodies a cultural continuity with the imperial past of the Near East and Mediterranean – a past that came to shape, ethically and otherwise, the private and public life of subjects under the rule of Islamicate civilization in the Middle Ages.

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4

Worldmaking and Early Modernity: Cartographic *Poesis* in Europe and South Asia

AYESHA RAMACHANDRAN

To speak of "world literature" in the early modern period is to run into trouble immediately. For while the centuries between 1450 and 1700 are often identified as the starting point of globalization – and thus, with the makings of the very *idea* of the modern world – this is also a time in which "world" remains a shifty signifier. Europe's encounter with the New World and the Portuguese conquest of the sea routes to Asia created the first modern global networks with far-reaching consequences – political, cultural, economic, biological. But these processes also precipitated cross-cultural confrontations and threatened universalist ideals, thereby raising thorny new questions about the nature of literature and aesthetic production on a global scale. Early modern writers struggled to envision the boundaries of the world, to constitute communities despite crosscutting cleavages, and to establish the nature of self and other against a swiftly changing backdrop of information explosion, skeptical thought, theological questioning, ethnographic curiosity, and astronomical speculation.

The cultural effects of this struggle to cope with the crumbling of old systems that had left the concept of "the world" suddenly undefined are often startling and poignant. Early modern writers frequently resort to fiction to make sense of new encounters and draw on familiar genres and narratives to give shape to their experiences of a changing world. Thus, in a famous passage of Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlán, can only be understood as a magical landscape from the pages of the popular romance *Amadis de Gaula*. Capturing the challenge of narrating the new, he writes, "some of our soldiers even asked whether the things that we saw were not a dream . . . there is so much to think over that I do not know how to describe it, seeing things as we did that had never been heard of or seen before, not even dreamed about" (del Castillo 1958:

190–91). In a similar vein, an illustrated copy of Abu Ṭahir Muḥammad Ṭarsusi's twelfth-century romance *Dārābnāma,* made for the Mughal emperor Akbar (completed around 1580–85), uses the narrative frame to refract contemporary political encounters.[1] Yael Rice notes that it contains "some of the most interesting early modern representations of Africans from outside Africa," since the illustrations of the legendary Zangi people show them with distinct physiognomic features and ritual marks, while also wearing a style of turban that (perhaps) identifies them with the ʿAdil Shahi Sultans, rivals of the Mughals whose capital was located in the Deccan Plateau (2018).

Such literary forms, constituted through processes of global interchange, cross geographies and challenge us to examine whether we can indeed speak of world literature as the aggregation of many distinct literary traditions of the world as Goethe would famously suggest in the early nineteenth century. Might we ask instead whether we can identify the emergence of "world literature" as a distinct phenomenon between 1450–1700, one inextricably bound up with the messy, conceptual tasks of early modern worldmaking? What might such a vision of "world literature" look like and what kinds of objects might it encompass?

In contrast to the traditional genealogy of world literature, which begins in the Enlightenment following the establishment of European empires across the globe, this chapter argues for an earlier ideal that develops over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in different places, languages, and forms. As peoples across the globe sought to reimagine their notions of "world" and to recalibrate their understandings of the relationship between the particular and the universal, we see the emergence of literary genres that explicitly take on problems of scale and meditate on the challenge of representation. For comprehending the world required deft oscillation between local details and global frameworks, a rapid shifting of epistemic perspective and, simultaneously, a rapid synthesis of different points of view. While measurement and observation – soon to become the standards of empirical science – could provide a record of local details, synthesis into a global whole required an act of imagination, a leap of theoretical speculation that forsook the precision of the example for the abstraction of totality. This imaginative, speculative work of remaking notions of "world" drew explicitly on the resource of *poesis* – making, fashioning – understood to be the province of literary and artistic figuration: in the early seventeenth century, even the young René Descartes would attempt to harness the

1 See British Library Or. 4615. Thanks to Yael Rice for calling this manuscript to my attention.

poets' "force of imagination" for philosophic use precisely because he understood it to be an important means to knowledge of the world.[2]

More specifically, worldmaking literature and other forms of aesthetic production in the early modern period are characterized by what I will call "cartographic *poesis*," that is, by an intent to shape and represent the idea "world," to bring it into being as a coherent concept and category – just as the simultaneously unfolding "cartographic revolution" sought to fix the world on a page.[3] This desire straddles a multiplicity of texts from mammoth cosmographic compendiae to minute lyric poems, from tragedy and epic to the new wave of utopian political treatises, from the writing of universal histories to individual autobiographic narratives that sought to draw the world into the self and vice versa. It is no surprise that many of these texts draw on cartographic motifs to signal their engagement with worldmaking. Much recent scholarship has shown how early modern literature across the world is a product of global exchange, and how, at the same time, such texts refracted and attempted to write the modern world into existence by capturing specific examples of transnational and transcultural engagements (see, for instance, Singh 2009; Subrahmanyam 2010; Doyle 2015; Fuchs 2015;). In this chapter, however, I will focus on developing a *literary history* of the concept "world" which suggests how the use of particular strategies in language – speculation, scalar juxtaposition, allegory, philology, and lexical play – became integral to imagining, naming, and shaping a particular vision of "world" across a range of media.[4] Here, "world literature" is defined as a conceptual force and intellectual modality, a way of seeing and making that transcends the particularity of cultural contexts and local traditions, making possible surprising juxtapositions and suggestive analogies on a global scale.

Two Visions of World: A Case Study

One of the central questions raised by the rubric "world literature" concerns perspective: *from where* is world literature – and indeed "the world" – to be

2 See *Cogitationes privatae*, Descartes's private notebook from 1618–19: cited from Descartes, XI.31. For an extended discussion of this phenomenon, see Ramachandran 2015: 152–55.

3 On the "cartographic revolution" of the early modern period, see the classic essays by Woodward (1991, 2007).

4 This is not to suggest that these strategies are exclusively the province of literature or literary texts. This chapter limits itself to their use in language, noting that they can be deployed across a range of media; of course, historians of art or film (for instance) would point to similar strategies used in image and sound.

envisioned? If the world looks different from different places and cultural vantage points, how can it be treated as a stable category that is intelligible across multiple contexts without subordinating some positions to others? Two roughly contemporary early modern works – one from Europe, one from South Asia – confront this problem and offer some surprising insights. I have deliberately chosen hybrid, mixed-media objects that defy traditional literary categories – both are ostensibly images with inscriptions rather than "texts" per se – but in doing so I hope to emphasize the significance of *literary strategies* in worldmaking aesthetics rather than a more narrowly defined set of works constitutive of "literature." From this perspective, a miniature painting framed by a poetic textual apparatus and a map-print rife with proverbial tags and classical allusions open into dialogue with a wider literary corpus; they demand to be read alongside a range of texts from which they simultaneously draw and to which they also contribute.

One of the most well-known manuscript paintings from early seventeenth-century India presents an allegorical representation of the fourth Mughal emperor, Jahangir, embracing the Safavid emperor, Shah ʿAbbas (Figure 4.1).[5] The two rulers are located on a partially depicted globe, centered on South Asia, which shows the three continents of the old world in a strikingly contemporary cartographic style. An enormous golden halo, bordered by a crescent from behind which peek out two cherubs, surrounds the figures; Jahangir, standing on a lion, towers majestically over his rival, who in turn stands on a lamb and is pictured as diminutive and cowering. This remarkable iconographic scheme, which responds to a specific political conflict, has attracted considerable scholarly attention, not least because it is clearly an aesthetic hybrid, mixing traditional elements of Persianate manuscript paintings with those of European Renaissance prints, which had been brought in great numbers to the Mughal court in the 1580s and 1590s by the Jesuits.[6] The image and inscription, described as "one of the greatest political pictures from any culture," advertises its worldmaking intentions in an unabashed instance of political power wielded through aesthetic force: it makes a claim for Mughal supremacy over both the Safavids and the Europeans even as it adopts and redirects tropes from those

5 "Jahangir's Dream" in the Freer Gallery of Art F1945.9. The nature of allegory in this image is the subject of much scholarly debate: see the classic discussion in Koch 2001: 1–11 and the recent important intervention in Rice (2011).

6 The specific political context for this painting may have been a dispute between the Mughal and Safavid courts over possession of the frontier region of Kandahar that was eventually captured by Safavid forces in 1622. The studies on this painting are numerous: in addition to Rice 2011 and Koch 2001, see especially, Beach 1981; Skelton 1988; Bailey 1998; Ramaswamy 2007; Koch 2012.

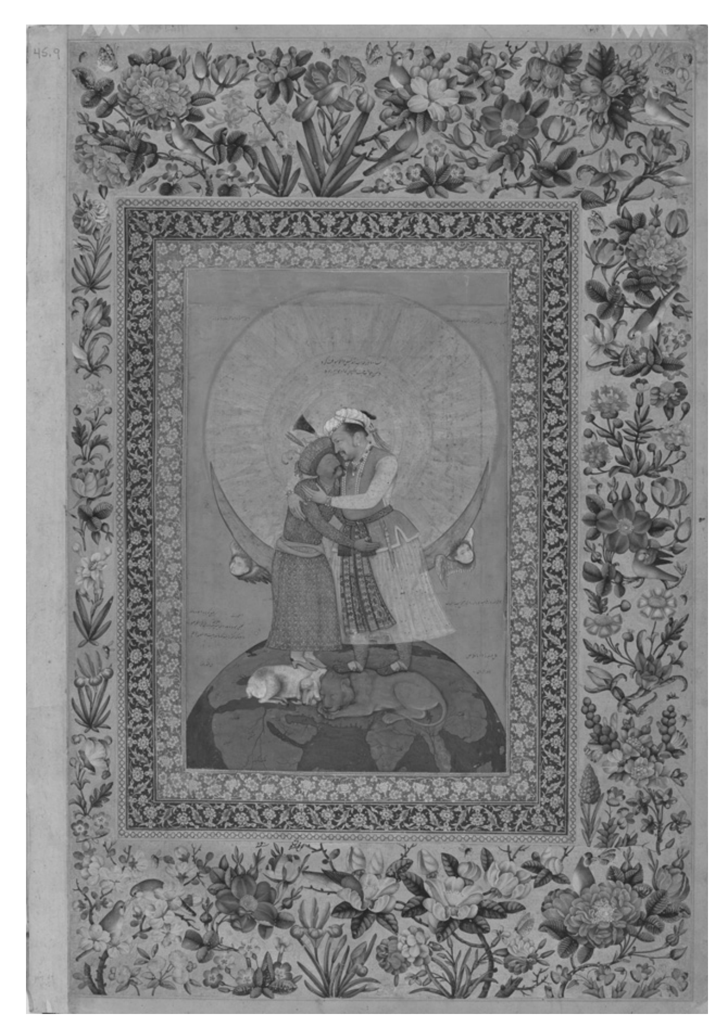


Figure 4.1 Abu'l Hasan, ca 1618–1622, "Jahangir's Dream" (F1945.9). Courtesy of The Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Purchase – Charles Lang Freer Endowment.

cultural traditions (Losty 1991: 81). As three distinct early modern cultures interact within the same iconographic frame, the rhetoric of cultural juxtaposition within the image manifests Jahangir's regnal name ("world seizer"), while the use of the map underlines the emperor's global ambitions.

However, the concerns of realpolitik, which seem to motivate the placement of the imperial rivals on a distinctly drawn world map, are strategically

framed within allegorical motifs that draw on a long medieval Islamic textual tradition of oneirocriticism (Rice 2011: chapter 2). Identified as a dream image in a prose inscription located in the composition's upper register, the image and its textual apparatus is closely connected to theological and spiritual concerns, specifically, perhaps, to a vision of Sufi-sanctioned kingship (see Rice 2011; Koch 2012; Moin 2012). The various symbols (lion, lamb, world map, cherubs, and halo) thus point to a complex layering of multiple systems of knowledge and power that cut across cultural difference and work in conjunction to reinforce the authority of the Mughal emperor.

Unsurprisingly then, one reliable approach to interpreting this, and other similar works, has been comparative, focusing on the study of the Mughal manuscript workshop's engagement with European styles of pictorial representation and political allegory.[7] But we might also ask how our understanding of this image would change, if we focus on the larger problem of imagining and representing the idea of "the world" from the different spatial and cultural vantage points depicted within its frame. For the image is also, quite explicitly, an assertion of a particular conception of the world, given the strategic use of the world map on which Jahangir and Shah ʿAbbas stand.[8] Indeed, the map, which appears to be part of a globe, has attracted critical attention from quite different directions – from the perspective of a history of cartography as well as a postcolonial critique of a Eurocentric cartographic discourse (see Schwartzberg 1987; Ramaswamy 2007; Koch 2012). Painted around 1618 by Abu'l Hasan, whose artistic epithet Nadir al-Zaman (Rarity of the World) also signals a worldmaking scope akin to his imperial patron, this depiction of a world centered on South Asia is indebted to the so-called cartographic revolution in sixteenth-century Europe. The outlines of the continents echo Abraham Ortelius's famous world map *Typus orbis terrarum* (1570, 1587; Figure 4.2) and owe more to Mercator than to Ptolemy or traditional Islamic cartography.[9] At the same time, even though the overall

7 Most of the cited studies on this painting take this approach; for a reflection on such comparative work, see Subrahmanyam 2007a.

8 This painting appears to be part of a series produced at the Jahangiri court depicting globes or maps. These include *Jahangir on a Globe* (now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art), *Jahangir with an Orb in His Hand*, and *Jahangir Standing on a Globe* (both in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin), and *Jahangir Using a Globe as a Footstool* (in the Freer Gallery of Art). These and other "globe paintings" are discussed in Ettinghausen 1961; Losty 1991; Okada 1992; Srivastava 2000; Verma 2005; and Ramaswamy 2007.

9 Schwartzberg argues that "there can be no question that the general shapes . . . indicated on the globe . . . derive from European maps," noting, for instance, that the northern shore of the Arabian Sea bears a striking resemblance to Hondius's *Magni Mongolis Imperium* of 1625 (1987: 409). The maps of both Ortelius and Mercator were well known to the Mughal court: the first Jesuit embassy to the court of Akbar had presented the

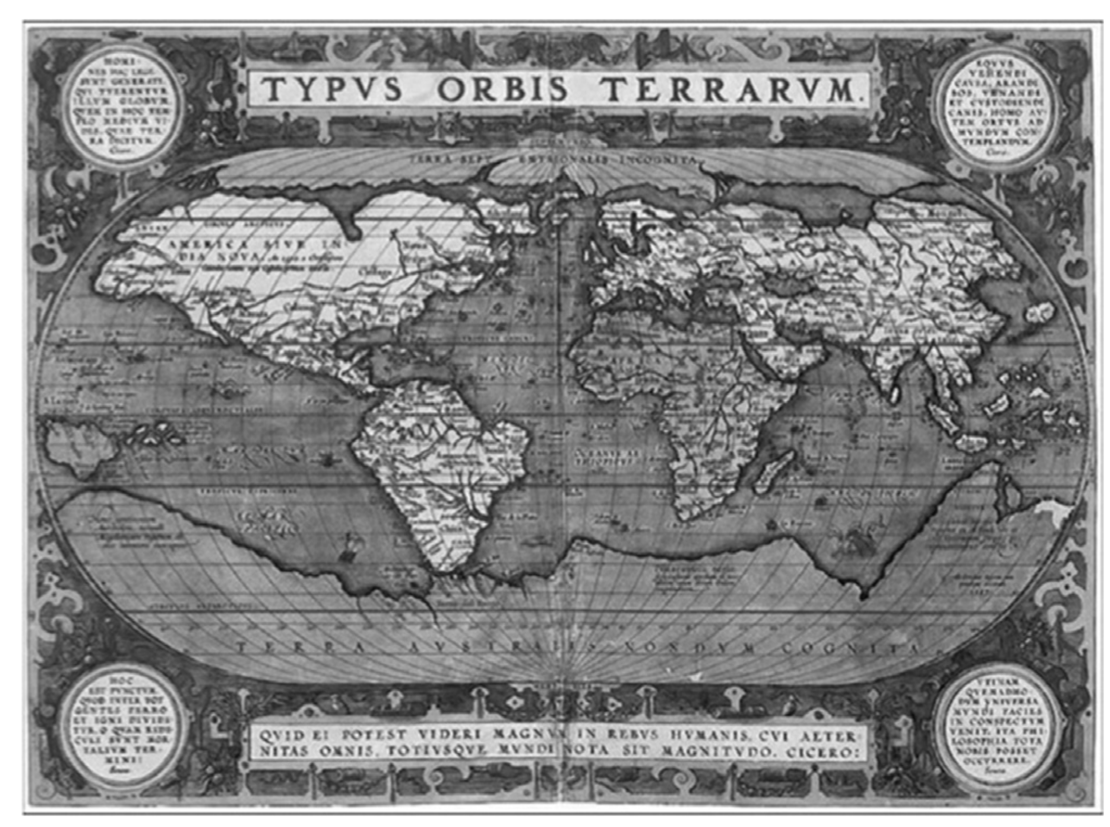


Figure 4.2 *Typus orbis terrarum*, in Abraham Ortelius, *Theatre de l'univers, contenant les cartes de tout le monde* (Antwerp, 1587). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

contours of the map are of European inspiration, "within the area of India, the delineation of rivers looks intriguingly distinctive" and "appear to be more accurately aligned than on roughly contemporaneous European maps" (Schwartzberg 1987: 409).

In this use of Ortelius as a visual/textual source, "Jahangir embracing Shah 'Abbas" is intriguingly connected to another famous generic hybrid, the *Fool's Cap Map* (Figure 4.3), printed anonymously around 1590 in Antwerp and widely reproduced in a range of disciplinary contexts today.[10] The print ostensibly depicts the bust of a jester in a motley cap, bearing a mace topped with a sphere. But, staring out at the viewer in place of a face is a state-of- the-art reproduction of Ortelius' world map. Entitled "Nosce teipsum" ("know yourself"), the image is filled with inscriptions emphasizing tropes of *contemptus mundi*, and a cartouche on the left bears a cryptic legend in Latin that announces, "Democritus of Abdera mocked it, Heraclitus of Ephesus wept for it, Epichthonius Cosmopolites deformed it." While the two Pre-Socratic philosophers are well known as the laughing and weeping sages in Renaissance lore, this last-named figure, Epichthonius Cosmopolites, is unidentified. Whether a pseudonym for the engraver, or the identity of the fool, the name hints at an allegorical program: the Latinized faux-Greek pseudonym is an erudite humanist joke, a play on words that juxtaposes *epichthonios,* a favorite Homeric epithet for mortal humans meaning "earthly ones," with *kosmopolites,* "citizen of the world," the tag that recalls Diogenes' famous declaration.

Janus-like, the map looks backward toward morality plays and fulminations against worldly temptations and forward at the proto-imperial, post-Columbian world. The world map of Ortelius, redrawn in 1587 to correct the southwestern coastline of South America, occupies the center. But, oddly for the post-Mercatorian cartography of the late 1580s, it is in a cordiform, heart-shaped, projection, scaled down and embedded into an allegorical matrix. If the mathematical acumen of Ortelius' latest plate signals the disenchanted, instrumental rationality of modernity, the teasing Erasmian motley cap

emperor with Ortelius' *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, which evidently became an imperial favorite; while Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to Akbar's son and successor, Jahangir, presented the latest edition of Mercator's *Atlas* to the emperor in 1617. On these gifts, see Schwartzberg 1987 and Subrahmanyam 2002. On Mughal mapping and pre-European cartographic practices in South Asia, see the pioneering work of Gole 1989 and 2003.

10 The map's authorship and provenance remain unclear; key interpretive essays include Shirley 1982; Chapple 1993; Helgerson 2001. For the standard cartobibliographic description, see Shirley 1984. For a recent analysis of the map in the context of early modern literary cosmopolitanism, see Ramachandran 2017.

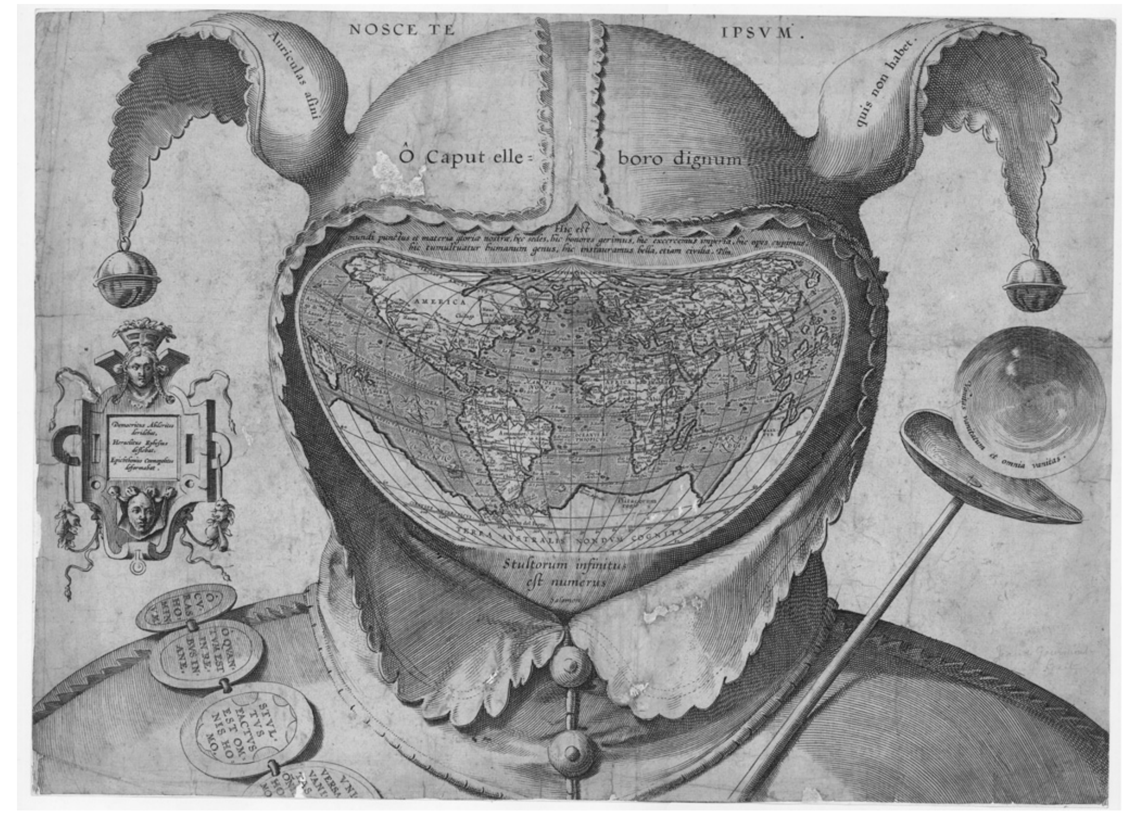


Figure 4.3 Anonymous, "Cordiform World Map in Fool's Cap" (Novacco MS 2F 6). Courtesy Newberry Library.

draws it toward an imaginatively sophisticated humanism grounded in classical and Christian metaphysics.

At the origins of modern cartographic and spatial practice, both the Mughal painting and the *Fool's Cap Map* simultaneously celebrate and deconstruct the world as an icon and idea. In their juxtapositions of imperial rivals and a globe, fool and world, both suggest that new global frameworks demand new subjectivities: while the Mughal work envisions a complex triangulation of global power that requires fluency in multiple cultural traditions, the European print depicts the nascent idea of the "cosmopolite," a word coined barely thirty years before. And both images are filled with textual inscriptions that reflect on modes of worldly vision: the Latin citation from Pliny on the map print reminds the viewer that from the perspective of the entire universe, the earthly world is no more than a "pinprick" (a *punctus*), while a poetic couplet inscribed above the two rulers' heads in the Mughal painting is a cryptic meditation on dreaming, waking, and the nature of the real.[11] Even on this cursory reading, both image-texts challenge contemporary theorizations of intellectual scale: beyond traditional tropes of macrocosm and microcosm, the works allegorically explore the relations between the global and the local, the universal and the particular, as they juggle the vast abstraction of the mapped world alongside the circumscribed particularity of the persons who inhabit it and who seek dominion over it.

Most significantly, perhaps, both works strategically deploy the figure of the map – invoking a new kind of cartographic literacy that would become almost synonymous with worldmaking – while simultaneously undercutting the politicized empirical authority of mathematics with the metaphysical power of earlier allegorical schemes. While the political uses of maps have been widely discussed, their affinity to the literary practice of allegory and their frequent incorporation within visual and textual allegories in the early modern period has been less noted. At once synthetic and deconstructive, allegory demanded a recognition of multiple scales of being and knowing, and relied implicitly on a theory of universal truth; as such it laid the

11 The citation from Pliny reads: "Haec est materia gloriae nostrae, haec sedes, hic honores gerimus, hic exercemus imperia, his opes cupimus, hic tumultuamur humanum genus, hic instauramus bella etiam civilia mutuisque caedibus laxiorem facimus terram!" *Natural History,* II.72. See my extended discussion of this in Ramachandran 2017. The couplet on the painting reads: "shah-i ma dar khwab amad pas mara khushvaqt kard / dushman-i khwab-i manast ankas ki az khwabam rubud" ("Our shah came in a dream and made me happy. / He who woke me from my sleep is an enemy to my dream."). Translation is by Wheeler M. Thackston from Freer Gallery of Art object file. See discussion in Rice 2011: 95.

groundwork for worldmaking as a habit of thought.[32] It is no coincidence, therefore, that both *Jahangir Embracing Shah 'Abbas* and the *Fool's Cap Map* are allegorical pictures in the tradition of other cartographic allegories, many of them polemical, or that they draw on well-known allegorical touchstones in their respective cultural contexts. Where the map-print draws on the iconography of Folly and the Fool in counterpoint to Ortelius' image of the world, the imperial portrait deploys *dad-u-dām* (wild and tame beasts) imagery to signal spiritual, cosmic harmony that transcends the map's territorial limits.[12]

Both works thus challenge contemporary critical accounts that treat maps and other spatial representations as proxies for the idea "world," implicitly assuming that cartographic images are essentially mimetic – workmanlike imitations as opposed to aesthetic creations, which must be "temporalized" or otherwise opened up for interpretive attention. Instead, both Mughal and Flemish artists insist on the aesthetic formalism of the map and use it to reflect on the metacritical challenges of global representation.[13] Christian Jacob has noted that "without the map, the world has no contour, neither limit, form, nor dimension"; the map creates "the world" as a clear concept and field of inquiry in the very act of representing it (Jacob 2006: 29–30). This understanding of the world as produced in the very moment of its representation is already evident in both the portrait and the map-print, and each work uses this insight to different ends.

Does the use of the same world map across these two vastly different cultural and literary contexts to signify strikingly similar meditations on scale argue for a consensus about "world" that transcended local differences? Or is it merely an index of the interactions brought about by global mobility, where traveling objects – like Ortelius' "Typus" – precipitated similar but noncontiguous conceptual reconfigurations across different places? There is also the question of technological symmetry that lurks behind the works' respective uses of cartographic knowledge systems and their respective worldmaking claims: the hybrid depiction of distinct kinds of cartographic knowledge within the Mughal painting's frame is striking, not least because in the early seventeenth-century world, maps and globes are thought to have been a rarity in India, while the Plantin press, where the *Fool's Cap Map* may

12 On the allegories of the Fool, see the famous images by Brant, Bosch, and Brueghel; Folly was also a familiar denizen on emblem books and the subject of Erasmus' *Moriae Encomium* (*The Praise of Folly*). For a recent overview see Chakravarti 2011. *Dad-u-dām* is a characteristic figure through which imperial artists depicted a ferocious beast of prey (*dad*) – such as the lion here – lying down with its potential victim (*dām*) – here the lamb; this trope is discussed extensively in Koch 2001: 116–29.

13 I am referring here to the versions of "world" differentiated in Cheah 2016.

have been printed, was at the vanguard of European cosmographic printing.[14] Is the use of the globe motif a sign of the emperor writing back, rejecting a Eurocentric portrayal of the world and redeploying this "most European of images" toward his own imperial self-fashioning?[15] Does the globe have a fundamentally different meaning within a Mughal frame than it does in a European one?

Such questions highlight a peculiar consequence of the global turn in literary study: despite all the attention to the global dimensions of literature, little critical attention has been directed toward unpacking the meanings and history of the term *world* itself in the early modern period, its relation to other scales of belonging, or toward theorizing literature's simultaneous ability to represent and mediate the dialectic of particular and universal signaled by "world."[16] This lacuna also highlights key challenges in conceptualizing "world literature": how might we account for differential modernities, inter-imperial rivalry, and colonial hierarchies alongside the development of cosmopolitan subjectivity and intricate cross-cultural negotiations? The clash of various kinds of power structures (spiritual, political, empirical) and the forced remaking of individual identities in response to a new sense of "world" in the early modern period – thematized in different ways by both the Flemish cartographic print and the Mughal album. These hybrid forms urge us to attend carefully to matters of genre, language, and the contexts of production and dissemination that are often complex and multilayered – thus raising important questions about commensurability and even the possibility for meaningful cross-cultural comparison. The *Fool's Cap Map*, for instance, belongs to a tradition of polemical cartographic images within the propaganda battles of the Wars of Religion, while the Mughal album is a manuscript collection without a narrative arc that combines texts and images in significant juxtapositions and where authorship is itself a fraught question. These objects therefore also point to the uncomfortable coexistence of different ethical trajectories within representations of and responses to the world in various literary contexts. At the same time, the suggestive

14 On the presence of maps and globes in early modern South Asia, see Joseph E. Schwartzberg 1987: 295–331; and Irfan Habib 1979: 88–105. On Plantin and a possible connection to the *Fool's Cap Map*, see my discussion in Ramachandran 2017.

15 Gascoigne (2002: 152) suggests as much in his classic account and Ramaswamy (2007: 758–59), concurs; see also Koch 2012.

16 However, see the important work of Cheah 2016 and Hayot 2012 on unpacking philosophical and theoretical debates over the term *world*, and Ganguly's (2016) key discussion of the material conditions that led to the formation of the global novel after 1989. See also Greene's (2013) pioneering discussion of worldmaking.

analogies between the two objects demand that we decouple the notion of "early modernity" and worldmaking from a specifically European framework and, consequently, also separate such conceptions as "world" from its associations with the Enlightenment and its related colonial projects. To do so, we must attend to the symbolic, philosophical, and intellectual histories of the term "world," its circulation across cultural boundaries, and the conditions under which cross-cultural understanding becomes possible.

The World in Early Modernity: Toward a Literary History

At the heart of both early modern and contemporary efforts to reclaim and revitalize universalizing concepts such as the "world" is a concern with scales of affiliation, with the widening circles of connection that emanate outward from the individual to the family (what Antony Appiah dubs "kith and kin"), the clan, the city, the nation, the empire, the world (and maybe even the universe beyond) (Appiah 2007). To grapple with the challenges posed by worldmaking and the world literature that scaffolds it, we must take seriously these complex, crosscutting scales and seek to get beyond an intellectual history of "world" that is all too frequently seen as no more than a by-product of (European) imperial expansion. Though worldmaking has frequently remained yoked to a statist, national apparatus, the legacy of the Enlightenment, and the economics of globalization, the "world" was never simply a catchall, hegemonic concept that contained all things and peoples or encompassed all territories across the globe. It carried tremendous ethical and metaphysical freight and demanded unique modes of synthesis for its conception. Imagining the world also required a revision of other collective categories of belonging, such as empire/imperium, nation, the state, or the local ethnic/religious community.[17]

Capturing this wide-ranging sense of "world" is particularly important for the early modern period because the term had not yet become synonymous with European imperial projects or with the global expansion of capital through Eurocentric trade networks. "Give me a map; then let me see how much / Is left for me to conquer all the world," commands Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, that quintessential imperialist in the eponymous

17 As Tamar Herzog has shown, though the historiography on early modern communities has long considered local affiliation to be oppositional to national or state formation, individuals could, and did, simultaneously hold multiple affiliations at various levels of community. See Herzog 2003: 10–11.

play, unswervingly focused on global conquest (Act V, iii). Significantly, Marlowe was drawing on the exploits of Timur, the fourteenth-century (d. 1405) Turco-Mongol conqueror whose exploits from Delhi to Ankara had made him an emblem for brutal (Eastern) imperial expansion. The success of *Tamburlaine the Great* in 1587–88 indexes the continuing European anxiety about non-European – specifically Ottoman and other Islamicate – polities and Europe's own growing desire for imperial dominion. But in this, it also reflects a vision of the early modern world that, as Sanjay Subrahmanyam has observed, "was for the most part a patchwork of competing and intertwined empires, punctuated by the odd interloper in the form of a nascent 'nation-state.'"[18]

This picture of inter-imperial rivalry, punctuated by the gradual consolidation of nation-states, points to a sliding scale of political belonging within which "world" represents an intangible, theoretical amalgam of all polities and peoples. At the political level evoked by Tamburlaine – and his real-world counterparts such as Suleiman the Magnificent, Philip II, or the Wanli Emperor – "world" signified all the territory available for conquest and universal dominion. But "world" also opposed "empire" – it could point to the territories and peoples *not* so dominated. "World" can thus offer an alternative vision of order that both resists and transcends the hegemonic energies of empire – even as it risks being co-opted into a display of imperial ambition. Far from an untroubled association of universalist rhetoric with the imperial nation-state, worldly connection also signaled a scale of belonging that transcended local, communitarian ties. Francisco de Vitoria's famous lecture "On the American Indians," for instance, presents an arresting argument for when and why universal norms can trump the claims of individual state actors.[19] The early modern vision of "world" thus assumes a bifurcated legacy: on one hand, it is assimilated into the ideology of empire; on the other, it underwrites international law and the ethico-legal regimes of universal human rights, moral-political resistance, and humanitarian intervention.[20]

Early modern literature frequently explores these tensions within the term *world* across a range of genres. Epic poetry, for instance, juggles national-imperial concerns with cosmic speculations: Camoes's *Os Lusiadas*, that most

18 Subrahmanyam 2007b. A similar point is made in Elliott 1992.

19 See Vitoria, who has recently been recovered as an important thinker for the history of international public law: see Haggenmacher 1988 and Muldoon 2006.

20 See the synthetic account in Hunt 2007, which traces this legacy from the eighteenth century onward.

stridently nationalist of poems, concludes with a cosmographic vision of the earth that dwarfs Portuguese imperial exploits, while Spenser's *Faerie Queene* terminates its vexed political questions and imperial desires in the Mutabilitie Cantos's analysis of a cosmic order that eclipses them. The metaphoric density of lyric tropes like Donne's in "The Sunne Rising" also explore scalar fusion: "She's all states, and all Princes I / Nothing else is." The extravagance of the conceit, just one instance of Donne's project to make his "one little room an everywhere," suggests how literary figuration articulates the simultaneous desire to be both at home and in the world, on a scale at once minute and all-encompassing.

Parallel generic innovations are evident in South Asian literary texts from the same period: noting the proliferation of *kathas* (tales) written in the reign of Jahangir, Francesca Orsini points out that Usman's *Citrāvalī* (1613) is marked by a striking geographical imagination, offering a "detailed map of the Mughal world." And Puhakar's *Rasaratan* (1618) invokes worldmaking amplitude as it refers chiastically to Jahangir as "jagata gurū jagapāla jagata nāik jagavandana" ["Lord and protector of the world, world hero praised by the world"] (Orsini 2017: 24). Paul Losensky and Rajeev Kinra have highlighted the insistence on *tāzāgī* – the fresh or new style – in seventeenth-century Indo-Persian lyric, an aesthetic as well as conceptual claim for a new way of writing the world (Losensky 1988; Kinra 2015). Drawing analogies between the metaphysical conceit and *khayāl-bandī* in the poems of Sa'eb Tabrizi, Losensky has recently speculated on the emergence of a "global baroque."[21]

Not only did literary figuration offer a supple instrument for theorizing individual and world as complexly connected, but writers, copyists, printers, and booksellers sought to transcend contested national boundaries and enable the creation of an international, cosmopolitan audience by shaping an ever-widening public sphere. The reciprocal relationship between literary figuration and universalizing thought is therefore manifest in the worldmaking force of both cultural forms and their contexts of production. Objects such as codex albums containing paintings or map prints mark the emergence of new genres. These include the world atlas, the cosmographic essay, the newly encyclopedic epic-romance, the transhistorical poetic anthology, the composite album, the dialogue on world systems, the natural-philosophic treatise, the universal history – all of which record, collectively, the twin birth

21 I am indebted to conversations with Paul Losensky who has shared some recent conference papers on these topics.

of the modern "world": as an ethical-metaphysical norm as well as a spatial-geographical concept.[22] At the same time, artisanal craftsmanship (paper milling, large-scale manuscript production, copper-plate engraving, and printing, for instance) and technological transfer on a transnational scale tested the bounds of the "local," as books written in the New World, manuscripts copied in Shiraz, and maps made collaboratively by travelers and mapmakers from Goa to Antwerp found audiences as far afield as Ireland, Istanbul, Peru, the Deccan Sultanates, Macao, and New Spain.

To lay out a *literary* history for the "world," therefore, as opposed to a social-scientific account, would be to examine the textual traces of the term across time and across global spaces. To do so would be to track its shifting contours and measure its changing scope through a range of texts as well as contexts of production and dissemination that can open up a semantic, lexical, and figural history of "world" as an alternative to a socioeconomic account of globalization.[23] The philosophic engagement with "world" that Pheng Cheah emphasizes would be but one aspect of such a history, which would also consider poems, plays, novellas, treatises, commentaries, atlases, manuscript marginalia, engravings, and woodcuts among many other sources. Creating an archive of such materials would enable an evaluation of how "world" becomes a cultural keyword for modernity – a transformation that gets underway in the sixteenth century and occurs as a conversation among disciplines and genres.

To recover this history of worldmaking as a literary force would be to reconstruct cultural and intellectual trajectories for the term *world* – initially, a deeply humanist enterprise pioneered by the philological quests of the early modern period, further developed and transformed in the era of high colonialism by writers such as William Jones, Alexander von Humboldt, and Friedrich Schlegel, and revived as an ethical-political practice by figures like Erich Auerbach and Edward Saïd. But what would a cross-culturally grounded lexical history of the world look like? What follows is an opening toward such an effort, focusing largely on Europe and South Asia – an effort which would undoubtedly require collaborative scholarly efforts on a global scale to approach any kind of comprehensiveness.[24]

22 For recent discussions of these two distinct sets of meaning for "world," see Derrida 2001 and Cheah 2016.
23 For a complementary methodological approach, see the discussion of "critical semantics" in Greene 2013.
24 This call to focus on a range of lexicons complements the approach urged by Mufti 2015.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see the modern conception of the world slowly emerge into view as the words used to designate a global or universal whole in both classical and vernacular languages in various linguistic contexts undergo significant reconfiguration. The contrasting uses of the Latin *orbis* and the Greek *kosmos* in early modern Europe point to the multiple meanings of "world" and their distinct afterlives. Derived from two related but distinct classical concepts – the *oikoumene* or *orbis terrarum* (the circle of lands) and the *kosmos* or *mundus* (the world or universe) – the words for "world" in most European vernaculars (*world*, *welt*, *monde*, *mondo*, *mundo*) begin at that time to take on both meanings. "World," whose medieval lexical roots were temporal rather than spatial, now drew together both meanings in a meditation on aesthetics and form.[25]

Isidore of Seville's seventh-century *Etymologiae* had already divided the study of the world by scale into sections on the cosmos ("De mundo et partibus") and on the earth ("De terra et partibus"), noting that the Latin *mundus* was an attempt to translate the Greek *kosmos,* a word that presented a distinctly aesthetic understanding that signified order, beauty, form, fashion and ornament (Isidore of Seville 2006). This aesthetic understanding of "world" as an idea of order also subtended Ptolemy's *Geography*, which was indebted to Aristotle's notion of organic wholeness in the *Poetics*. "World" at its modern origins, we might say, was already a literary ideal. On the political plane, the historians Livy and Herodian had suggested relations between Roman territorial concepts and religious ritual, which were then faithfully reproduced by Renaissance cosmographers and lexicographers to fill out a politico-spatial concept that remained linked to the universalizing tendencies of myth, theology, and ritual.

To this, early modern thinkers in Europe added a new term, "the universal world": a hybrid that marked the integration of land and sea into a single terraqueous planet and signaled the combined temporal-spatial and metaphysical amplitude of *kosmos* and *mundus* (Besse 2003: 2). It is worth noting the strangeness of this hybrid, which amalgamates ever-widening scales of belonging. It registers a tension, between an increasingly spatial-scientific idea (universe) and a sociopolitical, moral-metaphysical one (world) that is once again at issue today in debates over the global turn. Matter and metaphysics, aesthetics and politics thus become yoked at the level of the word, presenting a compressed linguistic archive whose critical significance Vico would already identify in the *New Science* (1725).

25 See the lexical discussion of "world" in Ramachandran 2015: 10–14.

This brief lexical history, however, looks significantly different when traced through two of the major languages of South Asia – Sanskrit and Persian.[26] Though more scholarship needs to be undertaken to tease out the meanings of "world" across these literatures, particularly as their meaning shifts from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, some conceptual trajectories are evident. As in the European classical languages, there are two distinct conceptions of "world" in Sanskrit: a notion of totality (signified by the noun *visva,* "the All," and compounds such as *idam sarvam,* "this all," or *samasta loka,* "the whole world combined") and a notion of a living, created world (signified by *jag*- and its compounds, such as *jagata,* "all that moves, the world").[27] While *visva*- encompasses the universe, including the gods and their worlds, *jagata* points to the mortal world of human beings, and thus, specifically to the earthly world. These two terms occupy a conceptual space apart from words that designate specifically spatial, territorial ideas such *bhūmī* ("earth, ground, soil, land, place, country") or *lōka* (a spatial division that can refer to a tract, region, country, or a particular part of the world or universe). But the range of possible compounds in Sanskrit allow for careful specification. This schematic division, which seeps into various vernaculars over the course of the early modern period, offered a way of organizing ideas of order at a macrocosmic scale, and a detailed study of their appearance across the Sanskrit literary historical corpus would offer a powerful means of tracking the intellectual history of "world" in South Asia.[28]

With its links to both an ancient Indo-European lexicon as well as Arabic, Persian by the early modern period (or New Persian) incorporates a range of words for "world." The two central, seemingly interchangeable concepts – *jahān* and *'ālam* – both have a spatio-temporal dimension (as the Latin *mundus*), but while *jahān* signifies the sublunary world, with a sense of horizontality or terrestrial expanse, *'ālam* invokes a universal, comprehensive sense of totality, often with a cosmological resonance, akin to the conceptual division evident in Sanskrit.[29] The significance of the two terms becomes clear in the ruling epithets taken on by the Mughal emperors of the

26 I focus on these languages only for illustrative reasons in a brief chapter – similar studies of other languages are crucial, though beyond my limited competence. The need for multilingual studies also underlines the importance of collaborative scholarly projects on world literature.

27 I am drawing on the Cologne Digital Sanskrit Dictionaries (www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/).

28 Such a project would be aided by the ongoing monumental Sanskrit lexicographical project: see Ghatage 1976.

29 I am drawing on Steingass 1892; and Horn 1893. Horn suggests that *jagata* and *jahan* may be etymologically related.

seventeenth century: in taking the name Alamgir ("seizer of the universe"), Aurangzeb explicitly sought to overgo his father and grandfather, Shah Jahan ("emperor of the world") and Jahangir ("world-seizer"). Moreover, the intertextual transfer between Sanskrit and Persian literary cultures in early modern South Asia, not only through translation but through the dialogue between polyglot literary communities that produces striking new works, serves as a testing ground for such comparisons. ʿAbdul Wahid Bilgrami, for instance, identifies the symbolic places of Braj and Gokul with gradations of the term *ʻālam* (Orsini 2014: 241).

These two words for "world" reach beyond a merely territorial understanding of the term, and indeed, the language offers many other words for specifically geographic visions of the world (such as *āfāq*, "horizons of the world, or universe; regions, tracts"; *haft iqlīm,* "the seven climes, the whole world"; *bisāt-i k̲h̲āk,* "the earth") and a more elemental understanding of the earthly world as *k̲h̲ākmān* (literally "house of dust or earth" meaning the world) or *arz* (earth) – words that correspond, in comparative signification, to the Latin *terra*.[30] *Duniyā* ("world" or "worldly goods") provides a metaphysical and economic concept of worldliness distinct from the encompassing notion of totality invoked by *jahān* or *ʻālam,* unlike the European languages in which both senses can be designated by the same word "world."

As this brief survey suggests, attention to the linguistic significations of "world" as they emerge from specific literary contexts and corpora and as they change across time force us to confront the conceptual complexity of the term "world" and the ways in which various cultural traditions account for it. The seeming conflation of "world" with territorial expanse and imperial desire is a relatively recent phenomenon and may itself be a product of European colonial practices, as Sumathi Ramaswamy's recent study of the figure of the globe in South Asia suggests (Ramaswamy 2017). Walter Mignolo's account of the brutal struggle over *imagines mundi* in the Americas under Spanish colonialism similarly attests to the power of worldmaking, at the lexical and aesthetic levels, to shape cultural futures (Mignolo 1995).

We must unpack the allegories contained in literary expressions of the world to engage seriously with the historical and philosophical force of

30 There is an important overlap here in European and Indo-Islamic intellectual and lexical history vis-à-vis geographical terms that corresponds to the place of Ptolemy in the transmission of geographic knowledge in both traditions that also demands further study.

aesthetic forms – to understand how genre and form can powerfully affect our experience of the phenomenal world and the way we conceive it. Instead of grappling with the seemingly inevitable erasures produced by totalizing categories such as "world," we can then begin to consider these terms as cultural keywords, rooted in and emerging from particular local contexts that inflect universalist aspiration in specific ways. To do this, we must compare the universalisms of Renaissance Europe to those of Mughal India, or those of the Ottomans to those of the Ming – not (only) as a struggle for dominance, but as a process that, breaking down traditional narratives about modernity and westernization, makes room for a history of universalist thinking distinct from the juggernaut of Eurocentric imperialism.

By introducing the problem of time and history – world history, the history of cultural production, and the historical composition of the globe's spatial expansiveness as a concept – into debates over literature and the world, we face a richer and more multifaceted phenomenon than solely post-Enlightenment capitalist and colonial paradigms allow.[31] To speak of contemporary theoretical debates from a critical position informed by materials from a time when Europe was in fact provincial, striving to claim a centrality that it did not yet have, is to bring together a reflection on large-scale spatial concepts with their history – to argue, in other words, that we cannot divorce terms such as planet, globe, and world from their long intellectual and literary transformations as epistemic categories.

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31 My call for a deeper consideration of temporality and historicity differs from Cheah's attempt to "temporalize" the world in a Heideggerian sense (see Cheah 2016).

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5

Colonial Philology and the Origins of World Literature

BAIDIK BHATTACHARYA

Weltliteratur, or world literature, in the nineteenth century does not name a corpus, a space, or even a problem in literary history. It does not even refer to one single history or one singular event as the origin point for a planetary vision of literature. Rather, it directs one to the confluence of global histories that produced a modern idea of literature and some of the critical tools that constituted the new discipline of literary studies. The material condition for this confluence was provided by modern European empires and their meticulous arrangements for colonial governance, sustained through painstaking engagement with different linguistic and scribal traditions. This is partly why going back to Goethe's conversation with Peter Eckermann in 1827 as the origin point for the idea of world literature is misleading.[1] Instead, I wish to begin with an account of world literature produced almost two decades prior to Goethe, by Friedrich Schlegel in his *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808):

> As in popular history, the Europeans and Asiatics form only one great family [*große Familie*], and Asia and Europe one indivisible body [*unzertrennbares Ganzes bilden*], we ought to contemplate the literature of all civilized people as the progressive development of *one entire system*, or as *a single perfect structure* [*die Literatur aller gebildeten Völker als eine fortgehende Entwicklung und ein einziges innig verbundenes Gebäude und Gebilde*]. All prejudiced and narrow ideas will thus unconsciously disappear, many points will first become intelligible in their general connection, and every feature thus viewed will appear in a new light.[2]

Though Schlegel did not use the exact phrase *Weltliteratur* in this passage, what he described as "one entire system" or "a single perfect structure" as the new

1 As we know now from the works of Hans-J. Weitz that Goethe did not even coin the phrase *Weltliteratur* – it was already in circulation among some members of Weimar Classicism like Christoph Martin Wieland (Pizer 2006: 1–2).

2 Schlegel 1849: 526; emphasis added. All references to the German original are from Schlegel 1808.

global reality of the "literature of all civilized people" pretty much summed up the sense of world literature, and even anticipated both its Goethean and its Marxian versions. What is more pertinent for my purpose here is the way Schlegel traced the genealogy of this idea through colonial history, through the extensive "research" done by colonial administrators/philologists stationed in Bengal in the final decades of the eighteenth century, and then proposed it as a template for all future research for literary studies. With this twining of literature and colonial governance, Schlegel suggested the very ground of world literature as a disciplinary vision anchored in the mechanisms of empires.

Schlegel was quite categorical about his debt to colonial philology. He frequently referred to the works of William Jones and occasionally mentioned two other colonial officials, Charles Wilkins and Alexander Hamilton, the latter being his instructor in Sanskrit (Schlegel 1849: 425, 458, 464). The central point of reference is the rudimentary structure of comparative philology initiated by Jones in his "Third Anniversary Discourse" (1786) in Calcutta. However, Schlegel's work also hinted at a larger constellation of colonial administrators and philologists stationed in Calcutta in the eighteenth century including Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, H. T. Colebrooke, H. H. Wilson, and many others who worked under the stewardship of the first Governor General of the British East India Company, Warren Hastings (Schlegel 1849: 458–65). Indeed, it was Hastings who as early as 1772 declared the ambitious plan to "adapt our Regulations to the Manners and Understandings of the People [of India], and the Exigencies of the Country, adhering, as closely as we are able, to their ancient Usages and Institutions" (Governor and Council in Bengal 1804, IV: 346). This led to a flurry of translations, grammars, dictionaries, and digests of comparative vocabulary in subsequent decades, purportedly explaining local manners and customs as well as religious belief systems. In 1785 he elaborated on his plans even further: "Every accumulation of knowledge, and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise a dominion founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state: it is the gain of humanity: in the specific instance which I have stated, it attracts and conciliates distant affections; it lessens the weight of the chain by which the natives are held in subjection; and it imprints on the hearts of our own countrymen the sense and obligation of benevolence" (Hastings 1785: 13).[3] In this chapter, I revisit this particular moment in colonial history, especially with

3 This colonial project had far-reaching effects; it led to, in Bernard Cohn's words, "the establishment of discursive formation, defined an epistemological space, created a discourse (Orientalism), and had the effect of converting Indian forms of knowledge into European objects" (1996: 21).

reference to the colonial state's enormous investment in philological investigations of Indian languages and literatures, to argue that it is here that some of the early traces of the nineteenth-century ideal of *Weltliteratur* can be located most presciently.

The point is not only to suggest that the Goethean or the Marxian version of *Weltliteratur* borrowed heavily from the British orientalists, nor even to demonstrate how many of the recent histories of world literature have remained oblivious to such histories. Rather, my attempt here is to rethink the project of world literature alongside colonial histories, to suggest that one of the reasons world literature became thinkable, and appealed to a wide range of thinkers like Goethe and Marx, was the colonial endorsement of its fundamental tenets in the nineteenth century. This is evident not only in Schlegel's text, but also in the works of a range of nineteenth-century comparatists like Franz Bopp, Rasmus Rask, Friedrich Max Müller, and Monier Monier-Williams.[4] As we shall see in the following pages, some of the vital methods of world literature – a new idea of literature, comparatism, and so on – emerged through what Bernard Cohn defines as the "investigative modalities" of the colonial state that transformed the empirical reality of the colony into a colossal body of "facts" through practices like historiography, museology, survey, census, and others (1996: 5). This abstraction relied heavily on the intimate connection between the colonial state and the idea of comparative philology, but it also fundamentally altered the very foundation of literature and literary histories, by making them reliant on an underlying ethnological structure as well as a European chronology. I have argued elsewhere that this alteration was prompted by capitalism's reliance on ethnography to capture and describe European colonies – or what I call "ethnocapitalism" – and that the very idea of world literature from the onset was a result of this capitalist drive (Bhattacharya 2018: 16–17). The point becomes even more persuasive as we explore the finer details of colonial philology, as we recognize how literary methods and readings were shaped by the ambition to perfectly know and categorize the world of the colonial subjects.

Persian Beginnings

Some of the early insights of what I call colonial philology were evident in William Jones's works from the 1770s, especially in *Grammar of the Persian*

4 The classic accounts of the kind of influence British colonial officials and philologists had on the turn-of-the-century debates on literature are still Schwab 1984 and Olender 1992.

Language (1771) and *Poems, Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Languages* (1772). In his *Grammar*, he argued that the mere translation of a culturally different text was not sufficient ground either to attract attention to the text or to understand it satisfactorily. The result of men spending their entire scholarly lives on the minutiae of Persian grammar and ignoring the "manners and sentiments" (or *culture* more broadly) was, in his opinion, very similar to that of "men who discover a precious mine, but instead of searching for the rich ore, or for gems, amuse themselves with collecting smooth pebbles and pieces of crystal." Or, better still, such scholarly labor of the grammarians, while laudatory, remained busy "adoring only . . . porticos and avenues," while it could have been better utilized "to beautify and enlighten the vast temple of learning" (Jones 1771: iii–iv). This was a curious claim to make in the preface for a book ostensibly designed to teach Persian grammar. It was even more so since the text was meant for the practical use of the colonial administrators in India who needed the language to further both their administrative and their commercial interests. Jones was aware of this practical appeal of his book and, in fact, pleaded unsuccessfully with the Company to secure some advances for the book on the ground of its future usefulness for colonial administrators (Cannon 1984: 85–86). And yet, he seemed convinced that mere grammatical rules, or even a grammatically correct translation, could not be trusted for the full appreciation of a language. What was needed for a colonial official to successfully administer "important affairs . . . in peace and war between nations equally jealous of one another," he suggested, was not only a technical knowledge of the language, but all the manners and sentiments associated with it, and even the cultural context within which it operated (Jones 1771: xii). Hence, initially he planned to "prefix to the grammar a history of the Persian language from the time of Zenophon to our days, and to have added a copious praxis of tales and poems extracted from the classical writers of Persia" (xv). Though the *Grammar* was published without this prefatory history, he soon fulfilled his promise by publishing a great deal of such material with his *Life of Nader Shah* (1773), and in later editions of the grammar insisted that the grammatical rules of Persian must be read along with these other texts. Once Jones linked the knowledge of a language with the explicit interests of the empire, he felt confident enough to assert that since the utilitarian muster had been passed, "the manners and sentiments of the eastern nations will be perfectly known; and the limits of our knowledge will be no less extended than the bounds of our empire" (Jones 1771: xiii).

The point I am trying to highlight is the way Jones deviated from the accepted conventions of General Grammar of the eighteenth century and developed a new approach to languages and texts in explicit conjunction with colonial governance. He cited three contemporary grammars of English – James Harris's *Hermes: Or, A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Language and Universal Grammar* (1751), Samuel Johnson's "An English Grammar," prefixed to his *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), and Robert Lowth's *A Short Introduction to English Grammar: With Critical Notes* (1763) – and argued that he had "refrained from making any inquiries into general grammar" as established by these authorities and instead focused on Persian grammar as part of a larger cultural milieu (Jones 1771: xiv–xv). It was of no small consequence that in 1772, just a year after the publication of Jones's *Grammar*, the Governor General Warren Hastings declared in India his plan to anchor governmental practices within native legal traditions and knowledge systems. Jones's point about the new conceptualization of language became the guiding principle for the Company officials in executing this ambitious program even before he reached India. One of the early outcomes of Hastings's project, Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* (1778), for instance, reverentially mentioned the "accurate and elegant grammar composed by Mr. Jones" that did "equal honour to the cause of learning, and services to his countrymen in Asia" (ix). This dual service to disciplinary knowledge and imperial interest was the hallmark of colonial philology, and it decisively shaped the subsequent discussions on world literature in the nineteenth century. What Jones and his colleagues in Calcutta were able to devise was not simply a new methodology but a new way of looking at language and a new vocabulary to discuss its literary expression with far-reaching consequences. Within the colonial world this new approach to language found its legitimation through its extensive use by the colonial state, and within the larger world it gained popularity because of its close proximity with imperial circuits of circulation. Once colonial administrators like Jones and Halhed began publishing their initial researches on Indian languages and literary texts, their insights were quickly appropriated by European intellectuals in their effort to break free of the neoclassical shackles that relied heavily on a neo-Aristotelian dictum of imitation as the governing principle of literary expressions.[5]

This critical insight of Jones found further elaboration in his next major publication, *Poems, Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the*

5 For a critical reading of this appropriation, see Ahmed 2018: 51–95.

Asiatick Languages. The central clue was provided not only in the poems included in this slim volume but also in the two essays Jones added to explain the mission of the volume as well as the crux of his craft. Jones's new theory was based on a rather unusual fact that most of the poems in this volume, despite the title, were not translations from any Asiatic sources in the strict sense of the term. "The first poem in the collection, called *Solima*," he told his readers, "is not a regular translation from the *Arabick* language; but most of the figures, sentiments, and descriptions in it, were really taken from the poets of *Arabia*" (Jones 1772: viii). Similarly, it turns out, all the other poems from the "Asiatick" sources, with the exception of the "Turkish Ode," were not "regular translations" at all. In the absence of a clearly defined author of these poems, he had to invent a new idea of aesthetic authority to defend this collection. This was even more necessary since he also wanted to defend the collection against what Srinivas Aravamudan describes as the eighteenth-century tradition of pseudoethnographic texts purportedly from "cultures that were seemingly foreign but that shared the past in ways that needed expert explanation." These texts were notable in the way they "speculated about a largely imaginary East" and also "titillated European readers with armchair voyagings and vicarious imaginings" (Aravamudan 2012: 4–5).[6] The point needs to be stressed, since not only was Jones familiar with this tradition, but he even borrowed ideas for some of his other poems from pseudoethnographic texts like William Collins's *Persian Eclogues* (1742) (Sitter 2008: 404). He made a clear reference to this other tradition when he opened his preface to *Poems* on this cautionary note:

> The reader will probably expect, that, before I present him with the following miscellany, I should give some account of the pieces contained in it; and should prove the authenticity of those *Eastern* originals, from which I profess to have translated them: indeed, so many productions, invented in *France*, have been offered to the publick as genuine translations from the languages of *Asia*, that I should have wished, for my own sake, to clear my publication from the slightest suspicion of imposture. (Jones 1772: vii)

6 Aravamudan proposes a long list of these authors from eighteenth-century Europe: "Enlightenment Orientalism had among its practitioners some very significant eighteenth-century French fiction writers, including Galland, Marana, Fontenelle, Pétis, Montesquieu, Hamilton, Crébillon, Prévost, Voltaire, and Diderot; its English wing can be represented by Behn, Defoe, Swift, Haywood, Montagu, Goldsmith, Johnson, Smollett, Sheridan, Beckford, and a host of minor writers who are largely unread today except by eighteenth-century specialists" (4–5).

His attempts to clear his publication "from the slightest suspicion of imposture" took a detour through two important elements of colonial philology – unmediated access to a culture and colonial authority. Take "The Palace of Fortune" as a case in point. He informed his readers that the "hint" of this poem "was taken from an *Indian* tale, translated a few years ago from the *Persian* by a very ingenious gentleman in the service of the *India-company*." However, what the reader was confronted with was somewhat different since, he admitted, "I have added several descriptions, and episodes from other *Eastern* writers, have given a different moral to the whole piece, and have made some other alterations in it, which may be seen by any one, who will take the pains to compare it with the story of *Roshana*, in the second volume of the tales of *Inatulla*" (Jones 1772: x). Consequently, the authority in this case was not concerned with the poem included in the collection, but with a preexisting literary tradition and a prior text by a colonial official, i.e., Alexander Dow's *Tales Translated from the Persian of Inatulla of Delhi* (2 vols., 1768). The difference between spurious oriental tales (especially of French origin) and Dow's text was highlighted through the fact that the latter was produced using the intricate mechanisms of colonial occupation, including language learning, and hence through unmediated access to the cultural world of the text. The point he made in his *Grammar* – of mastering the manners and sentiments of a language and not merely its grammatical rules – was now anchored within the peculiarity of the land attested by colonial officials, and also within a closer connection between geography and cultural production.

Jones's essay "On the Poetry of the Eastern Nations" further highlighted this connection between geography and culture – it imagined a "poetic culture," as Aamir Mufti puts it, that traveled across the geography of Asia, from Arabia to Persia and eventually to Central Asia and India (2018: 71). The veracity of his hypothesis was maintained through the peculiar sensibilities of the inhabitants of these lands as also through the spiritual integrity of Islam. The territorial, and eventually ethnographic, logic of this other tradition depended on the way the aesthetic production was shaped by the physical geography and its climate. Jones stated his case in the following words:

> Now it is certain that the genius of every nation is not a little affected by their climate; for, whether it be that the immoderate heat disposes the *Eastern* people to a life of indolence, which gives them full leisure to cultivate their talents, or whether the sun has a real influence on the imagination (as one would suppose that the ancients believed, by their making *Apollo* the god of poetry) whatever be the cause, it has always been remarked, that the

> *Asiaticks* excel the inhabitants of our colder regions in the liveliness of their fancy, and the richness of their invention. (1772: 170–71)

He first established this idea through the unique example of "Arabia . . . because no nation at this day can vie with the Arabians in the delightfulness of their climate, and the simplicity of their manners" (163). This peculiarity of the Arabian topography and climate, he indicated, was the chief source of the poetry they produce, and it was the close connection with nature that secured its characteristic beauty. He argued that "an allegory is only a string of metaphors, a metaphor is only a short simile, and the finest similes are drawn from natural objects" (167). It was only logical, then, that this peculiarity of nature would be part of their poetry, both *beautiful* and *sublime*:

> [S]o, when they compare *the foreheads of their mistresses to the morning, their locks to the night, their faces to the sun, to the moon, or the blossoms of jasmine, their cheeks to roses or ripe fruit, their teeth to pearls, hail-stones, and snow-drops, their eyes to the flowers of the narcissus, their curled hair to black scorpions and to hyacinths, their lips to rubies or wine, the form of their breasts to pomegranates, and the colour of them to snow, their shape to that of a pine-tree, and their stature to that of a cypress, a palm-tree, or a javelin, &c.* these comparisons, many of which would seem forced in our idioms, have undoubtedly a great delicacy in theirs, and affect their minds in a peculiar manner. (168; emphasis original)

The point of such an argument was to link the text with the territory, of course, but the very structure of this and similar other passages also made it clear that Jones was pleading for a very different poetic culture that combined the aesthetic and ethnographic values in equal measures.

The Sanskrit Sublime

Though Jones arrived in India with the ambition of knowing "*India* better than any other European ever knew it," he soon discovered that the colonial officials in Calcutta had already been set upon a similar task under the stewardship of Governor General Hastings, and he indeed entered the stage, as it were, *in medias res* (Jones 1970, II: 751). The first major outcome of Hastings's project was Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's *A Code of Gentoo Laws, or, Ordinations of the Pundits* (1776).[7] Unlike many later volumes, especially Jones's *Institutes of Hindu Law: or, The Ordinances of Menu* (1794) and Henry Thomas Colebrooke's *A Digest of Hindu Law, on Contracts and Successions*

7 For the details of Halhed's life and his career in India, see Rocher 1983.

(1796–98), however, Halhed's *Code* was not translated directly from Sanskrit. A group of eleven Brahmin pundits were commissioned to compile a digest of Hindu civil laws between 1773 and 1775 under the title *Vivādarṇavasetu*. Zayn al-Dīn ʿAli Rasaʾī, a *munshi*, or scribe, employed by the company, prepared a Persian translation of the Sanskrit digest, and Halhed used this Persian version for his translation (Cannon 1990: 230–31; Trautmann 1997: 32).[8] Despite this limitation, and the obvious conflict with the new orientalism of language learning, the *Code* was initially designed to be the "Ur-text" of Hindu laws, and Halhed buttresses the idea by comparing his compendium with Roman laws: "much of the Success of the Romans may be attributed, who not only allowed to their foreign Subjects the free Exercise of their own Religion, and the Administration of their own civil Jurisdiction, but sometimes by a Policy still more flattering, even naturalized such Parts of the Mythology of the Conquered, as were in any respect compatible with their own System" (Halhed 1776: x). Such grandiose claims could only be sustained through a demonstrable mastery over his material, and also through his ability to communicate the native legal knowledge in languages accessible to the European public as well as his fellow officials of the Company. Hence, and also to guard against the fact that the *Code* was not a direct translation from Sanskrit, he offered a detailed account of how the correct *recensio* of the text was produced through extreme care and rigor:

> The Professors of the Ordinances here collected still speak the original Language in which they were composed, and which is entirely unknown to the Bulk of the People . . . A Set of the most experienced of these Lawyers was selected from every Part of Bengal for the Purpose of compiling the present Work, which they picked out Sentence by Sentence from various Originals in the Shanscrit Language, neither adding to nor diminishing any Part of the ancient Text. The Articles thus collected were next translated literally into Persian, under the Inspection of one of their own Body; and from that Translation were rendered into English with an equal Attention to the Closeness and Fidelity of the Version. Less studious of Elegance than of Accuracy, the Translator thought it more excusable to tire the Reader with the Flatness of a literal Interpretation, than to mislead him by a vague and devious Paraphrase; so that the entire Order of the Book, the several Divisions of its Contents, and the whole Turn of the Phrase, is in every Part the immediate Product of the Bramins [Brahmins]. (xi)

8 Halhed continued to rely on Persian translations, as evident from his unpublished translations of various Upaniṣads from their Persian translations prepared by Dārā Shikoh, the eldest son of the Mughal emperor Shāh Jāhān. For details on these unpublished translations, and for the text of the Preface Halhed composed, see Rocher 1977–78: 279–89.

Halhed was too anxious to establish the credibility of his digest and thought it best to imply that it was a verbatim reproduction of the esoteric learnings of the Brahmins.

However, the recognition of Sanskrit as the exclusive access to Indian antiquity remained active in the colonial imagination, and Halhed eventually had to face it. Initially he offered rather evasive defenses of his own limitations by suggesting that though the "Shanscrit Language is very copious and nervous" and though it "far exceeds the Greek and Arabick in the Regularity of its Etymology," most "Shanscrit Grammars are . . .too abstruse even for the Comprehension of most Bramins, and others too prolix to be ever used but as Reference" (xxiii–iv). This was clearly not good enough for the new phase of orientalism that placed immense premium on language learning. Hence, he soon conceded the fundamental orientalist point about languages, and in a digest of civil laws even felt it necessary to include a rudimentary outline of Sanskrit, including its alphabets, orthography, some grammatical rules, and a longish note on literary styles. This was the first such attempt by any Company official and hence merits a closer look. The whole tract on Sanskrit was based on the idea that while it was imperative for the colonial government to anchor its legislations in those texts, there were very few resources to distinguish between legal texts and others, since they were often mixed with each other and written in a language that required close reading. Halhed also complained frequently that very few of the Brahmins he met could claim any degree of authority given the obscurity of these texts and the language they were written in. He presented the case of the four *Vedas* as an eminent example: "From the many obsolete Terms used in the Beids [Vedas], from the Conciseness and Obscurity of their Dialect, and from the Particularity of the Modulation in which they must be recited, they are now hardly intelligible; Very few of the most learned Pundits, and those only who have employed many Years of painful Study upon this one Task, pretend to have the smallest Knowledge of the Originals" (xxxii). Faced with such obscurity of the original texts, and equally bewildering traditions of commentary, Halhed employed two devices which would soon become the cornerstone of comparative philology – i.e., grammar and prosody. He first suggested that such texts could be read properly and used for the purpose of governance only if the grammatical rules were clearly set. From the "abstruse" and "prolix" grammar books, he indeed extracted a few rules which, according to him, were intelligible and useful. Halhed also observed that grammatical rules were of limited value in his case since many of these source texts were composed not in prose but in verse; hence, a clear account

of the Sanskrit prosody was equally warranted. He offered a rough sketch of Sanskrit prosody as well, including its various meters or "chhund," and then, armed with the twin techniques of grammar and prosody, he set out to decipher a few texts in the preface (xxiii–xxxvi).

Jones, on the other hand, quickly recognized the possibilities of Sanskrit. In a letter written in 1787, Jones observed: "*Sanscrit* literature is, indeed, a new world . . . In *Sanscrit* are written half a million of Stanzas on sacred history & literature, Epick and Lyrick poems innumerable, and (what is wonderful) Tragedies and Comedies not to be counted, above 2000 years old, besides works on Law (my great object), on Medicine, on Theology, on Arithmetick, on Ethicks, and so on to infinity" (Cannon 1970: 747). He went as far as suggesting a parallel between this ancient treasure trove of India and the classical civilization of Greece – "substituting Sanscrit for Greek, the *Brahmans*, for the priests of *Jupiter*, and *Valmic*, *Vyasa*, *Calidasa*, for Homer, Plato, Pindar" (756). He elaborated on this in his essay "On the Literature of the Hindus, from the Sanscrit" published in the very first volume of the *Asiatick Researches*. Referring to a Sanskrit tract called "*Vidyádersa*, or a *View of Learning*," Jones proposed that the core of Hindu India had always existed within a dense intertextuality of the *Shastras*, but given the secretive nature of the Brahmins, the custodians of these *shastric* texts, one was forced to employ close and philological readings to unlock their reservoir of learning. The central texts in this tradition were the four *Vedas* as well as the tract of *Gītā*, but the everyday reality of Hindu cultures needed to be explained through a number of other texts. Jones told his readers that "the *Véda*, *Upavéda*, *Védánga*, *Purána*, *Dherma*, and *Derśana* are the *Six* great *Sástras*, in which all knowledge, divine and human, is supposed to be comprehended" (Jones 1807a, IV: 110). With this argument, Jones produced a unique map of India and claimed that any point of contention in the present had to be resolved with reference to this dense textuality of the land. In an important sense, he proposed one of the early moves in what Edward Said describes as the textualization of the Orient since the eighteenth century that produced a different reality of the land for colonial governance.[9] And by the 1780s, through successive hands like Hastings, Wilkins, Halhed, and eventually Jones, this technique of textualization became commonsensical, so much so that any discussion on India was perforce premised on this central assumption. It was assumed, as a logical corollary, that the habits, manners,

9 For a definition of this "modern Orientalism" of the eighteenth century, see Said 2003: 42.

sentiments, and characters of the Indians were somewhat immutable, and hence the best guide to such unassailable qualities could have been these ancient texts. However, this new order of knowability had a serious implication for the colonial engagement with Sanskrit. Jones noted in his essay that "[s]ince *Europeans* are indebted to the *Dutch* for almost all they know of *Arabick*, and to the *French* for all they know of *Chinese*, let them now receive from our nation the first accurate knowledge of *Sanscrit*" (Jones 1807a, IV: 113). In each case, he imagined these non-European languages as primarily functional, serving larger goals of governance and commerce. And in this functionalist imagination, Jones made little distinction between literary and nonliterary texts; instead, he treated all texts in Sanskrit as part of one single tradition, and belonging to one order of language. Sanskrit as a language, thus, gradually made its claim against Persian (and Hindustani) as the sole representative of India, and also as the chief governmental instrument. He even set a precise date for this new engagement with India and its linguistic universe – anything before the publication of Wilkins's translation of *Gītā*, he announced emphatically, should henceforth be treated as inauthentic and unreliable.

While Jones consciously brought colonial governance and ethnography to fashion a new idea of literature, he also made a parallel attempt to comprehend Indian antiquity (as well as its textual representation in Sanskrit) within a comparative framework. He was, even in this case, following the lead of Halhed in proposing the fundamental rules of comparatism. In his Bengali grammar of 1778, Halhed observed that "I have been astonished to find the similitude of Shanscrit words with those of Persian and Arabic, and even of Latin and Greek: and these not in technical and metaphorical terms, which the mutation of refined arts and improved manners might have occasionally introduced; but in the main ground-work of language, in monosyllables, in the names of numbers, and the appellations of such things as would be first discriminated on the immediate dawn of civilization" (Halhed 1778: iii–iv). From these "similitudes" he inferred a further point about the territorial reach of Sanskrit: "The grand Source of Indian Literature, the Parent of almost every dialect from the Persian Gulph to the China Seas, is the Shanscrit; a language of the most venerable and unfathomable antiquity; which although at present shut up in the libraries of Bramins, and appropriated solely to the record of their Religion, appears to have been current over most of the Oriental World" (iii). In support of his thesis, he cited a range of archaeological evidences like coins and seals with Sanskrit inscriptions recovered from different parts of the Indian subcontinent, and even argued

that, on the evidence of a text in the possession of the "Raja of Kishenagur," one could surmise ancient links between India and Egypt (iv–v). Almost a decade after this preliminary observation of Halhed, Jones made his well-known speculation about the comparative nature of language families in the "Third Anniversary Discourse" (1786) at the Asiatic Society:

> The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists; there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the *Gothick* and the *Celtick*, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the *Sanscrit*; and the old Persian might be added to the same family.
> (Jones 1807b, III: 34)

This passage is often taken as the first systematic statement of the "Indo-European" language family (extended and elaborated on later by Schlegel, Rasmus Rask, and Franz Bopp), as also the starting point for comparative philology. Its colonial origins, as outlined above, are writ large over the whole project.

The framework for this comparative method was derived from the work done in previous years. As James Turner puts it:

> Jones brought new focus and frame to scholarship on India. Not long after stepping ashore in Calcutta, Jones lobbied company employees who shared his philological bent to join in an association to foster Asian studies. [. . .] Jones and his colleagues in the Asiatick Society recovered other artifacts of ancient Indian civilization for Europeans, including smaller-scale Sanskrit works – in effect, reprocessing Indian culture, in more or less inventive ways, as Europeans had long done with Greece and Rome. (Turner 2014: 94–95)

Even Jones's work on philology, including "Anniversary Discourses," needs to be seen as part of this inventive way that Thomas Trautmann describes as "Mosaic ethnology" or "an ethnology whose frame is supplied by the story of the descent of Noah in the book of Genesis, attributed to Moses, in the Bible" (1997: 41). Jones's annual lectures were not, strictly speaking, only philological; he rather planned to deliver these lectures on the principal nations in Asia – hence, his third to seventh discourses (1786–90) were on, respectively, the Hindus, the Arabs, the Tartars, the Persians,

and the Chinese. He added an eighth one on the "Borders, Mountaineers, and Islanders of Asian" (1791), and in the ninth arranged all of them under the title "On the Origins and Families of Nations" (1792). "It becomes clear in the ninth discourse," Trautmann maintains, "that the entire project is one of forming a rational defense of the Bible out of the materials collected by Orientalist scholarship, more specifically a defense of the Mosaic account of human history in its earliest times" (1997: 42). Thus Jones selected Hindus, Arabs, and Tartars as original stocks (the Persian and the Chinese nations were deemed as branches of the Hindus) and related them to the three sons of Noah – Ham, Shem, and Japhet. What he did in India, and what had a lasting impact on philological practices, can be seen as the reorganization of new orientalism with an ethnological framework and a new schema of time.

In his works on Sanskrit texts, Jones posed a question: "whether [Indian chronology] is not in fact the same with our own [i.e. Mosaic history], but embellished and obscured by the fancy of their poets and the riddles of their astronomers." And at the end of his long and often curious discussion of various texts, he concluded that these two chronologies ran parallel to each other and that they might even have been the same despite their different forms of recollection. He cited various texts of "Astronomical Computations of the *Hindus*" (*Sūrya Siddhānta* and *Varāhīsanhitā*) in support of his chronology and stated: "the *Mosaick* and *Indian* chronologies are perfectly consistent; . . . that a considerable emigration from *Chaldea* [Iran] into *Greece*, *Italy*, and *India*, happened about *twelve* centuries before the birth of our Saviour; that SĀCYA, or SĪSAK, about two hundred years after VYASA, either in person or by a colony from *Egypt*, imported into this country the mild heresy of the ancient *Bauddhas*; and that the dawn of true *Indian* history appears only three or four centuries before the *Christian* era" (Jones 1807a, IV: 65–66). Thus, in the final chronological table Adam and Menu I, Noah and Menu II, Nimrod and Hiranyacasipu paralleled each other (Jones 1807a, IV: 47). This revision of Indian history through an already available ethnological frame was necessary for the comparative method he wished to introduce because without this shared chronology the central point of comparatism would not have made sense. What became the central tenet of world literature in the nineteenth century, i.e., comparable "literature" across different cultures, was anchored in this primary move of the colonial state to make the Indian reality legible and historical through specific "investigative modalities."

Conclusion

Let me conclude with Friedrich Schlegel. What he borrowed from Jones and other colonial administrators was this history of colonial philology of course; but he was equally careful in not reducing this history to the available discourses of orientalism. In fact, he argued that his contemporary orientalism was based on a set of prejudices that did not allow one to see the historical connections between the "dwellers of Asia and the people of Europe." It was this prejudice that not only kept these different civilizations strangers to each other, but also obscured any scholarly investigation of their shared past. In contrast, he maintained, colonial interventions in Asia (and especially in India), and the works of Jones and Wilkins, made it possible for the first time to see both literature and literary history in a new light. These new initiatives superseded narrow orientalist narratives and opened the possibility of conceiving literary history on a global scale, with a vigor unprecedented in critical thinking. For Schlegel this was because of the centrality of comparative philology in these new colonial missions. He even argued that the way forward also resided in language: "It is my opinion, therefore, that all works on philosophy . . . should trace the language from its first natural origin down to the point at which it first became enfeebled, and thence sunk deeper and deeper in the abyss of degradation" (Schlegel 1849: 522–25). Once language is historicized, and once these historical components are related to each other through philological investigations, Schlegel hoped, the new history of a worldwide literary culture would become clearer.

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6

Globalism's Prehistory: Technologies of Modernism

JULIAN MURPHET

From the vantage point of the contemporary, with its communicative instantaneities and the ever-accelerating automatisms of an "internet of things," so-called modernity and its cultural-artistic correlative "modernism" have begun to look rather distant and quaint, like lost worlds, unequipped to offer much in the way of cognitive orientation to the present. Nor, in the event, has the conceptual innovation of "postmodernism" done enough to aid our acute spatial bafflement and existential dissociation within the inexorable worldwide supply chains, the micro-second transfers of credit through forests of fiber-optic cable, the social-media magnification and manufacture of "identity," the chilled server farms and glittering FEZs, the tides of displaced refugees, the CCTV-drone-and-satellite logic of distributed surveillance, and the logistics of "smart warfare" that define the dynamics of globalism. Yet underneath it all, one all-pervasive socioeconomic pattern persists, with just enough recognizable in its basic movements to assert an unbroken continuity with that vanished world of steamships and telegrams: the accumulation of capital.

Moreover, it is incontestable that what we continue to call "cultural" or artistic products are today closer than ever to that underlying motor of the world economy – to the extent, some would argue, that there is no longer any point in splitting hairs over the conceptual difference between economic and aesthetic value (Clover and Nealon 2017). Novels and films, paintings and string quartets continue to be produced, but their production does not call into question – cannot formally challenge – the social nature of production itself; rather, in an ongoing process of adapt-or-perish, these older forms have had to accommodate the new digital hegemon of "information" in order to survive at all, becoming commodities just like any other. As all the old analogue technologies that we call media – including the printing press – are remediated as commercialized strings of mobile code, or survive on the

periphery as luxury-artisan goods, what vanishes is any shadow of critical distance.

But modernism, so-called, was already just such a meltdown of inherited values and techniques. Just as today digital convergence takes all the analogue and electronic media and migrates their information into ubiquitous black boxes for broadband download, so too *the novel* once found itself remediated as "movies," *the poem* was imprinted (accompanied by tinny music) on grooved disks of shellac, and *the play* ricocheted wirelessly around the world as "radio." Media have been busy platform-shifting the older arts on to the newest industrial carriers since the end of the nineteenth century, thereby leading the international charge of capitalism around the world in the form of "soft power." This is why our present conjuncture's hardwired infrastructure of circuit boards, fiber-optic cables, and electrical powerlines can throw revealing light on the techno-material matrix of what Fredric Jameson called the "strange new global relativity of the colonial network" at the end of the nineteenth century (1991: 412). Technology's role in spreading the bourgeoisie's "need of a constantly expanding market for its products . . . over the entire surface of the globe" is evident above all in the verbs that Marx and Engels used to describe the process: "It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere" (1978: 476). Nestling, settling, establishing connections everywhere, communications technology was to become for imperialism the critical material platform for its new logic of accumulation, dispossession, and crisis. With it, a world was won whose existential intensities it was the task of modern literature to map.

And what a map it was. Imperialism and colonialism constituted the first ever properly global system of control and circulation, no longer depending upon the happenstance movements of traders and the vagaries of supply and demand but explicitly integrating articulated regimes of expropriation, extraction, transit, processing, manufacture, and distribution, within a singular form of accumulation, flung out across the globe. This prodigious reorientation of the economy, away from narrowly national markets, involved far-reaching adjustments to the "ways of seeing" inherited from the recent past. The widening gulf between the structural reality of a colonized planet and the lived experience of its situated inhabitants made for some unprecedented torsions:

> At this point the phenomenological experience of the individual subject – traditionally, the supreme raw material of the work of art – becomes limited to a tiny corner of the social world, a fixed-camera view of a certain section of

> London [for example]. But the truth of that experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place. The truth of that limited daily experience of London lies, rather, in India or Jamaica or Hong Kong: it is bound up with the whole colonial system of the British Empire that determines the very quality of the individual's subjective life. Yet those structural coordinates are no longer accessible to immediate lived experience and are often not even conceptualizable for most people. (Jameson 1991: 411)

These chasms between the true and the lived, the real and the imaginary, became so acute under imperialism that the arts and letters could no longer suture them with anything resembling aesthetic "realism" – since the "real" has absented itself from sense perception. It is in this situation that "the various modernisms as such emerge; in forms that inscribe a new sense of the absent global colonial system on the very syntax of poetic language itself, a new play of absence and presence that at its most simplified will be haunted by the exotic and be tattooed with foreign place names, and at its most intense will involve the invention of remarkable new languages and forms" (410–11). It is a striking theoretical innovation, missing only the necessary technological dimension. For, as we shall see, both the "exotic" per se and those "new languages and forms" in which modernism was to have (allegorically) configured the missing global system were being actively promulgated in entirely new media forms and technological institutions: the cinema, photographic magazines, mass-circulating newspapers, the radio, and the phonograph. What we will want to determine is how modernism's formal mutations were orchestrated by the new media system on whose platform monopoly capitalism was predicated.

Modernism only ever existed *ex post facto*, of course, except in that exceptional location – Latin America – where it was first proclaimed by Rubén Darío (in 1890) as a new cultural order of things. As Harsha Ram points out, the "term *modernism* . . . first emerged to designate a programmatic poetics of innovation out of a geographically peripheral generalization and local re-elaboration of recent [Parisian] literary currents, currents viewed as distinct in the European metropolis but conflated and repurposed by intellectuals from the periphery to meet local needs" (2016: 1376). This devious absorption and re-engineering of metropolitan culture by artists of the (ex-)colonial world turned not only on the new speeds of intercontinental travel permitted by steam ship and rail but on the spread of those other new technologies – telegram, photography, rotary press printing, and the new journals they made possible – that yoked center to periphery in new webs of implication. It was in the "rest of the world" that modernism as a concept was

incubated, in one of the first proofs of that new and extraordinary fact of imperial globalization: that the metropole cannot truly know the colony, while the colony cannot afford not to know the metropole. It is through experiential torsions of temporal and spatial coordination that the periphery, negotiating an absent power it has no option but to ken, generates a concept – modernism – equal to the task of mapping the resultant, irreconcilable vectors. It is worth noting, too, that this critical origin story has its inevitable sequel in our present. The core capitalist countries of the postmodern world having proven their relative cultural sterility over decades, the old ex-colonies now generate most that is compelling in a literary sense. It is a situation where "the whole theory of a properly Western modernism now needs to be revised in the light of the experience of modernization in the third world" (Jameson 2010: 112).

In any event, the various movements and masterpieces that now constitute our retrospective image of metropolitan modernism are similarly contoured and accented by the missing "world object" that imperialism had brought into existence. Much has been said about the importance of Tahitian culture to Gaughin, of Dahomey masks and totems to Picasso's Cubism, of the Belgian Congo to Conrad, of a certain idea of China and Japan to Poundian Imagism, of Indian spiritualism to Eliot's *Waste Land*, and so on: the role and function of a distant, non-European space to the formation of critical modernist masterworks is clear and persistent. What is less understood is how this "other" world circulated in the media ecology of the time, and how paradoxically dependent it was on new and thoroughly modern technologies to enter metropolitan consciousness.

In Italy the first major avant-garde of the twentieth century was hatched, in 1909, under the banner of the future. The Futurists were a charismatic band of like-minded painters, poets, and propagandists, led by the indefatigable Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, who summarily dismissed the accumulated corpus of "the arts" in order to make way for the media technologies of the world to come. Their assaults on the "leprous, crumbling palaces" of the old artistic order were issued by technological fiat: "holy Electric Light," "metal bridges and howitzers" – "Man multiplied by the machine. New mechanical sense, a fusion of instinct with the efficiency of motors and conquered forces" (Appolonio 1973: 97). This mechanical barrage on the frail organic limits of the human was at the same time an assault on the cultural bastions of everything merely national, local, and parochial. In a Futurist manifesto for the cinema, the authors repudiated the extent to which this new and mechanical art had already (in 1915) "inherited all the most traditional sweepings of the literary

theatre" and advocated instead a cinema that would realize itself by seizing its open relationship to the world: "The mountains, seas, woods, cities, crowds, armies, squadrons, airplanes will often be our formidable expressive words: *the universe will be our vocabulary*" (Marinetti et al. 2004: 227). Especially, they latched on to the idea of "cinematic simultaneity and interpenetration of different times and places" in order to "decompose and recompose the universe according to our marvellous whims" (228). Cinema, that is to say, offered an entirely novel formal approach to the representation of the world, allowing artists to splice and dice its multifoliate appearance, mixing and matching according to aesthetic protocols that had nothing to do with inherited criteria of artistic form and everything to do with unprecedented technical possibility.

The only extant cinema that won the approval of the Futurists in 1915 was "interesting films of travel, hunting, wars, and so on." Indeed, the ethnographic or travelogue film (the two were scarcely separable at the time) was the paradigmatic form in which the wider world "came home" to the metropole in this period, alongside illustrated photographic magazines like *National Geographic*. Serious anthropological work, including that of Félix-Louis Regnault (Wolof, 1896), Alfred Cort Haddon (Torres Strait, 1897), Rudolf Poch (Dutch New Guinea, 1904–6), Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead (Bali, 1930s), and Franz Boas (Alaska, 1930s), exposed indigenous bodies and folkways at the peripheries to the mechanical gaze of the camera, and the resultant films circulated widely in Europe and the USA. But these were only the more responsible works of an exploitative tendency that gravitated toward exoticism and sensation in the far-flung places of the earth. Such films were "frequently employed as propaganda for the colonial agenda of industrialized nations . . . After 1905 numerous films were taken in the British, French, German, and Belgian colonies of Central Africa, including *Chasse à l'hippopotame sur le Nil Bleu* (Pathé, 1907), *Matrimonio abissino* (Omenga, 1908), and *Leben und Treiben in Tangka* (Deutsche-Bioskop, 1909)" (Musser 1997: 89). It is a question not only of the self-serving imperial optics of such films but of the very legibility of their images to viewers in Paris, London, and New York.

The first issue of the important cinema journal *Close-Up* (1927) featured a sequence of stills from the film *Voyage au Congo* (Marc Allégret, 1927) – adapted from his lover André Gide's book of the same name – with accompanying text by Jean Prévost. The stills appear conventionally ethnographic in framing and content: unclothed Equatorial Guineans posed along the Sauga River. But the accompanying article by Prévost makes some remarkable claims about legibility:

> The everyday happenings so commonplace to those who do not understand their significance are set here in their essential picturesqueness. The disappointed fiancé[e] who rubs her belly to express and soothe her grief, the caresses of her small sister, are here no mere native custom nor the language of a savage; one had to know what they meant, and now for the first time an exotic film explains this to us without being pedantic.
>
> (1927: 40)

Here the accent falls on what in the photographic or cinematic image tends to escape the notice of viewers with no pertinent social or cultural comprehension. The present exception named, the rule becomes suddenly visible: a general deluge of photographic data bringing nigh the entire planet, yet without any key to make sense of these ubiquitous signatures of the visible. Deprived of this explanatory matrix, the "essential picturesqueness" of exotic photography establishes an ontologically tenuous relationship with the globe of which it ostensibly offers proof.

That very tenuousness can be a boon for imperialist epistemics. Virginia Woolf writes, in *The Waves*:

> And look – the outermost parts of the earth – pale shadows on the utmost horizon, India for instance, rise into our purview. The world that had been shrivelled, rounds itself; remote provinces are fetched up out of darkness; we see muddy roads, twisted jungle, swarms of men, and the vulture that feeds on some bloated carcass as within our scope, part of our proud and splendid province. (1994: 489)

Cinema and the magazines make possible this sudden "rounding" of the planet itself, its "rising into our purview" on the basis of that handy visual shorthand known as "montage": "we see muddy roads, twisted jungle, swarms of men, and the vulture that feeds on some bloated carcass." Colonialism thrives on the artificial engorgement of a desiccated worldview by a stereotypical image-bank that we call the "imperial imaginary," threaded together like shots on a filmstrip.

Yet the threadbare veracity of these decontextualized images of the world served a more utopian agenda too. "I'm Bored," writes Russian Futurist Vladimir Mayakovsky – the sometime screen scenarist – in a poem of that name. His solution is to immerse himself in the intoxicating distractions of the modern: "Driven out to the world by my ennui / I go / to the flicks" (Mayakovsky 2016: 68). There in the cinema he will find precisely the missing element without which his fellow country people lapse into immitigable tedium: the world viewed.

> You're all so boring, it's as if Capri
> didn't have its place in the universe.
> But Capri does exist.
> The auroras of all the flowery
> islands, like a woman in a pink headdress.
> Let's take a train to the seaside and leave the seaside
> behind us, our bodies swaying on the decks of steamships.
> We'll discover America a dozen times.
> We'll visit the earth's unknown poles for daytrips. (65)

These painless daytrips and voyages of discovery all take place in the comfort of a poem modeled on a local picture palace. Here, if nowhere else in the desolate stretches of Petrograd before the revolution, "Capri *does* exist." In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer would write of the cinema (in a chapter entitled "Enlightenment as Mass Deception"): "What is offered is not Italy but evidence that it exists"; a poor compensation for the fact of sitting alienated in a dark hall (2002: 119). *Contra* these doyens of "the melancholy science" of negative dialectics, Mayakovsky discovers in this flimsy, two-dimensional ontology of film a new spatial liberty, an opportunity to disport in the extraordinary transitional possibilities of the newest art; what Tolstoy had divined in the films as early as 1908: "This swift change of scene, this blending of motion and experience – it is much better than the heavy, long-drawn-out kind of writing to which we are accustomed. It is closer to life. In life, too, changes and transitions flash by before our eyes, and emotions of the soul are like a hurricane. The cinema has divined the mystery of motion. . . . Drr! and a scene is ready! Drr! and we have another! We have the sea, the coast, the city, the palace" (2016: 158).

The very practice of writing, then, was challenged in its essence by the new medium: "heavy, long-drawn-out" passages of description and scene-setting (the stylistic staples of realism) were rendered obsolete by the power of twenty-four frames per second. It was much as Marinetti had written of the experience of flight at the same time: "In the airplane . . . I sensed the ridiculous inanity of the old syntax inherited from Homer. A burning need to liberate words, to pull them out from the prison of the Latin period" (Pisano 2003: 254). The language arts stood to suffer nothing short of a shattering aesthetic revolution, instigated by machines that shook apart the settled verities and forms of literature, and opened up the world to new kinds of depiction. To write after cinema, after the airplane, after the telegram and the mass-circulating newspaper, was to internalize certain unavoidable laws: of compression and concision, lightning-swift transitions, machinic assemblages, and the rejection of the sort of verbiage that

depended upon what Friedrich Kittler has called the age of the "monopoly of print," when "writing functioned as a universal medium – in times when there was no concept of medium" (1999: 5–6). With new machines able to record sound, project moving images, and type reams of paper, the older literary proprieties gave way under pressure of a mounting redundancy; what I have elsewhere called a process of "convergent differentiation" around 1910, when the old system of the fine arts finally (and uncomfortably) merged with the new technological media system, led to strange borrowings and transpositions, one system, one medium, to another (Murphet 2009: 21–25).

Blaise Cendrars was probably the most perspicacious of the contemporary poets to adapt their art to these new conditions. His masterpiece *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France* (1913) anticipates his subsequent career in the cinema – as an assistant director to the great Abel Gance on *La Roue* (1921; for which he assembled the famous montage of the running train) – as well as his intercontinental wanderlust – his *Anthologie Nègre* (1921) recorded his sensational impressions of life in Africa and South America. The poem, originally published on a folded 7-foot-long sheet of paper illuminated by Sonia Delaunay's watercolors, evinces a unique formal passion for what would be called *montage* in the cinema: unpredictable cuts in continuity, erratic rhythms, unstable lineation, and an effort toward what Cendrars called a "simultaneism" of word and image. New systems of transport and communication entailed abrupt shifts in register, setting, tone, and mood. Traveling by train through Russia and back to Paris, the poet and his prostitute companion, Jeanne, experience space and time as a thrilling barrage of place names and passing snapshots on a dizzying world tour:

> I spent my childhood in the hanging gardens of Babylon
> Playing hooky, following the trains as they pulled out of the stations
> Now I've made the trains follow me
> Basel – Timbuktu
> I've played the horses at tracks like Auteuil and Longchamps
> Paris – New York
> Now the trains run alongside me
> Madrid – Stockholm
> Lost it all at the gay pari-mutuel
> Patagonia is what's left, Patagonia, which befits my immense sadness,
> Patagonia and a trip to the South Seas . . .
>
> (Cendrars 1992: 20)

This habit of peppering the page with the stray signs of a world flashing past is derived more or less directly from the media and transportation technologies – and the imperial-capitalist networks of trade they tended – that made such a

conceit possible in the first place. When T. S. Eliot wrote, in *The Waste Land* nine years later, of his ideal-composite "Unreal City" – "Falling towers / Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London / Unreal" – it was another version of Cendrars's poetic particle accelerator, its motor lodged in a whirring cinematograph (Cendrars 1992: 77).

An earlier effort in the same direction, Hope Mirrlees's "Paris: A Poem" (1920), adapted Cendrars's method to an altogether more contextualized occasion – namely, the lead-up to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, in which the city (placed at the meridian of the world republic of letters) held its breath and dreamed the world at peace with itself:

Cloacæ
Hot indiarubber
Poudre de riz
Algerian tobacco
Monsieur Jourdain in the blue and red of the Zouaves
Is premier danseur in the Ballet Turque
Ya bon!
Mamamouchi

YANKEES – "and say besides that in Aleppo once . . . "
Many a *Mardi Gras* and *Carême Prenant* of the Peace Carnival;
Crape veils,
Mouths pursed up with lip-salve as if they had just said:
Cho-co-lat . . .
"Elles se balancent sur les hanches."
Lizard-eyes,
Assyrian beards,
Boots with cloth tops –

The tart little race, whose brain, the Arabs said, was
One of the three perches of the Spirit of God. (Mirrlees 1919: 12)

Here French imperialism is subject to a kind of metropolitan impressionism in which the empire is glimpsed in the peripheral marks, the contingent, fleeting trivia of daily life. In the aftermath of the World War I, the Paris Peace Conference was to have been the inaugurating event of a new world order based on recognition and respect; in anticipation of its possible impact, in this poem at least, that event weaves around itself a long, twisted skein of spatiotemporal strands from around the globe, strung with radiant nodes. There is little enough space here for a subject to cohere around these swirling transnational references, let alone time to sift and filter the experience: poetics

outstrips psychology by the power of a machine-perception thrust in the midst of a world-historical event.

This is rather different from the experience that Claude McKay concretized in his poem "The Tropics in New York" (1920), where the lurid "Bananas ripe and green, and ginger-root, / Cocoa in pods and alligator pears, / And tangerines and mangoes and grape fruit" visible in the shop-front windows of Lower Manhattan, trigger an affective surcharge of Jamaica's "old familiar ways": "A wave of longing through my body swept" (2008: 154). Such *memoires involuntaires* of the Caribbean émigré are the by-products of a vast export/import industry enabled by steamships, telegrams, and imperial technologies of customs and tariffs; but they round on the subject like an accusation. A later Harlem poem of the 1930s, Langston Hughes's "Wait," similarly proceeds from the metropolitan availability of "SUGAR" and "GRAPES", to draw together an altogether more comprehensive, even epic, network of global economic forces in a convulsive portrait of an anticipatory structure of feeling. As Ruth Jennison describes it:

> From Meerut, India where the British colonial government jailed and tried Communists and non-Communists alike for organizing a railway strike in 1929, to the suffering of Koreans under Japanese imperialism, to Chinese struggles against Japanese imperialism in Chapei, Shanghai, 1932, to the brutally suppressed embryonic multi-racial solidarities of the 1913 Johannesburg miner's strike, to the political campaigns to free the Scottsboro defendants in the early and mid 1930s, to the 1903 strike by the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association against the American Beet Sugar Company in Oxnard, California, the poem weaves together a global assemblage of economic and political struggle. (2019: 213–14)

This very assemblage is made possible by the daily disgorgement of tonnes of newsprint, newsreels, radical journals, leaflets, and so on, the living substance of a metropolitan radical consciousness in the early twentieth century. As the Russian literary theorist Victor Shklovky observed around the same time, echoing the Futurist manifestos, poets should use more than the language of poetry, "but documents and extracts from letters and newspapers" (1988: 133). The poet's role, no longer vatic, is that of the interested curator of "items" circulated within the new media ecology, clipping headlines and small print and assembling out of the fractured jigsaw a moving image of the global totality.

For McKay and Hughes, a potent additional factor had saturated the existential horizon of the laboring black poor; a factor that assumed epic, world-historical proportions in the "red summer" of 1919. McKay's

"Exhortation: Summer, 1919" catches fire from the Bolshevik spark of 1917 and senses the international repercussions of that singular event like so many radio pulses beamed around the planet. The poem's abiding thought is of "Africa! long ages sleeping, O my motherland, awake! . . . to the East turn, turn your eyes!" It is a parallel cry to that of Cendrars aboard the Transsiberian: "I foresaw the coming of the big red Christ of the Russian Revolution . . . / And the sun was an ugly sore / Splitting apart like a red-hot coal" (McKay 2008: 16). The internationalist solidarities evidenced in McKay's verse are prototypical: the working-class Jamaican, having passed through Tuskeegee and Manhattan, finds himself in London, where the pulsing signals of the proletarian revolution engender thoughts of an emancipated African continent. "Globalization" in this period is not, then, always simply a factor of capitalist subsumption and enclosure, but equally a resistant vector of transformative political passion.

It is in the work of William Carlos Williams and Louis Zukofsky, however, where this globalized constellation comes most vividly into focus as a mediated effect of the new Soviet film industry. As David Kadlec observes, "Like many of the radical American filmmakers who were associated with the Workers' Film and Photo League (WFPL) between 1930 and 1935, Zukofsky and Williams were inspired and invigorated by nonfiction film coming out of the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and early 1930s" (2004: 303). In their letters, they exchanged enthusiastic remarks about the Bolshevik documentaries they were fortunate enough to see. The Soviet state had early understood the vital importance of cinema to promulgate and galvanize communist enthusiasm among Russian masses who not only spoke several different languages but were largely illiterate; and of exporting that enthusiasm to the world at large. Lenin was supposed to have proclaimed that "of all the arts, for us the cinema is the most important," a line that ends up in Zukofsky's supreme epic, *"A"* (Cowie 1971: 137). And this fact illustrates what would be, for Zukofsky and Williams (as for Ezra Pound, in other ways), a novel accent on actuality and documentary incident – on the use of found verbal and visual materials in their verse – much as the great Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov had pioneered a new kind of anti-literary cinema by privileging cine-truth over narrative and psychology. Zukofsky's very definition of his poetics – Objectivism – turned on a deliberate homage to the new medium: "*An Objective: (Optics) – The lens bringing the rays from an object to a focus. That which is aimed at. Use extended to poetry*" (2000: 12). Having seen in New York City a print of Jacob Bliokh's *A Shanghai Document* (1928) – through the services of the communist film society Amkino – Zukofsky remarked in a

letter to Williams: "And seen, I've seen the Amkino Presentations . . . . I'm drunk, How shall I say it? Two movies together making *our* St. Matthew Passion – *our Passion* – . . . the movies became, well, became, just *became* <*Art*!> . . . [A]fter this evening with Amkino I can't help but *know* that I will know what I am at," a telling reference to compositional difficulties he was having with his epic *"A"* (Ahearn 2003: 19). That poem was to become a living repository of cinematic techniques. As Kadlec puts it, *"A"* suggests "in its eclectic and inclusive structure, that a future language can be constructed from the very sorts of archival fragments that filmmakers were forced to use during times of crisis and shortage. Simply put, the pieces of newsreel that make up portions of Zukofsky's poem would not have been there without the Soviet tradition of unplayed film" (2004: 313).

Meanwhile, back in the Soviet Union itself, in Harsha Ram's words, "the Russian avant-garde strove to generate a planetary internationalism of aesthetic form commensurate with world revolution" (n.d.). We have seen the extraordinary impress of this internationalism on the metropolitan and subaltern subjectivities lit up by its new map of the world, but what remains to be seen is the extent to which that world was brought back into the Soviet consciousness of form itself. Ram's argument concerns the work of Velimir Khlebnikov and his extraordinary quest for "*an alternative geopoetics of world literature*" – one in which Russian art and literature would gather up the latent energies of communist internationalism the world over and refract it through local, regional, national, and planetary mediations in such a way that the capitalist West would no longer enjoy a monopoly over the organs of taste and distinction. It was with his multimedia "supersaga" *Zangesi* in particular that Khlebnikov tried to effect a lasting geopolitical innovation to literary form. Its central figure, the prophet Zangesi

> is co-terminous with the earth's topography, binding microcosm and macrocosm, with "rivers for hair:" the name Zangezi is itself likely an amalgam of the Rivers Zambezi and Ganges, symbolizing the union of Asia and Africa, an idiosyncratically Hindu figuration of the Comintern rallying cry of anti-imperialist solidarity. (Ram n.d.: 45)

And the play itself "articulates an internationalism of poetic and cognitive innovation designed to unify the human race, in tandem with the goal of world revolution" (51). This imaginary unity with the broad, suffering sodality of the planet's poor was issued, at least in contemporary performance, through the designing agency of its co-producer Vladimir Tatlin, whose soaring, mechanically inspired sets and props squarely situated this pan-terrestrial vision

within a horizon defined by large-scale industrial machinery, cinematography, radio transmissions, aeronautical lines of flight, and the spreading international network of telegraph cables. Geopoetics, like geopolitics, was only possible thanks to its material infrastructure.

By the end of the modernist period proper, the intermediation of cinema and the language arts had reached such a pass that it would be futile to claim, even for poetry, any kind of purity from cross-contamination. Indeed, it could justly be said that the greatest of the poems written from a modernist sensibility are those with the deepest debts to the rival media. Take, for just one instance, the case of Turkey's greatest twentieth-century poet Nazim Hikmet, whose magnificent epic *Human Landscapes from My Country* concerns a cross-section of his tortured homeland as discovered on board a long train journey and in a state prison. His translator Mutlu Konuk describes the leading techniques: "Drawing on his experience not only as a playwright but as a screenwriter, Hikmet composes his story as a montage and alludes – in his radical juxtapositions of different tenses, images, and perspectives – to such cinematic techniques as pans, zooms, and freeze frames, jumps cuts and dissolves, flashbacks and even forward flashes" (2002: xiii). Most important for us is how this series of canny derivations from a dominant narrative medium achieves effects of international awareness, particularly via "remediations" or (in the following case) deliberate *ekphrases* of the competitor forms. Here, three shopkeepers in the prison yard discover a 33-year-old newspaper, published in 1912, in large part illegible apart from stray lexemes and part-phrases; one of them reads it aloud:

> . . .   reactions from Europe . . . . .
> . . . .   *La Tourquie*
> (must be a French paper)
> . . .   telegrams from European capitals . . . .
> The victory of the Young Turks . . . .
> Paris, 28 April:
> . . . .   All newspapers. . . Abdul Hamid's condition .
> Budapest, 27 April:
> . . .   The press generally . . . . . .
> Paris Bourse, 28 April:
> . . . . .   trading is slow . . . . .
> Ottoman holdings gained forty points . . . . . .
> Orient Railways shares. . . . .
> London Exchange also very quiet . . . .
> . . . .   Ottoman shares . . .
> . . . .   Amsterdam. . . .
> Because the queen of the Netherlands gave birth last night . . .

constitutional government in Iran . . . .
. . .   Freedom lovers growing stronger . . . . .
Advertisement:
Three-day trip to Alemdagh.   (Hikmet 2002: 264)

In this, our culminating instance of the globalized form and frame of reference of literary modernism, we glimpse the innermost essence of the "new world order" of a late imperialist epoch now long dead. There is, in this fraying snapshot-montage of "1912" seen from the bitter vantage point of 1945 in a prison yard full of jailed communists, a potent x-ray of the causes of its savage disorder – international finance capital, the charade of national government, and the phatic narcissism of the media (newspapers writing about newspapers and "the press generally," and selling luxury vacations through advertisements). For modernism, there was only ever this one world, where money traded on money in global paroxysms of profit, power shifted across one node of accumulation to another, the working poor gave up their life-essence to the industrialized creation of value, and the new mechanical media sold it all as a triumph of rational accountability. Modernism's art was to trim away the verbiage and exhausted justifications, and present the remaining kernels of evidence the way a film projector exposed each frame of celluloid to a blinding ray of illumination. In its dizzying image-sequences, modernism caught the world in its consolidated form as a monstrous international cabal of bankers, politicians, industrialists, and "manufacturers of consent," hell-bent on an orgy of accumulation around which the entire planet buckled and broke.

We live in the wake of this world.

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7

After 1945: Holocaust Memory, Postcoloniality, and World History

SONALI THAKKAR

This chapter makes a case for the persistent salience of the Jewish Holocaust in postcolonial and world literatures. Reading across several postwar novels, it shows how the postcolonial world's myriad engagements with Holocaust memory are the result of entangled histories that are, in turn, captured in an expansive literary and cultural archive. I propose contrapuntal memory as a strategy for organizing and reading this disparate archive. To begin, I briefly elaborate the usefulness of this concept, which repurposes Edward Said's contrapuntal reading.

In recent years, scholars have sought to establish connections between anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, colonial history, and postcolonial politics. Part of this work has entailed tracing how techniques of colonial genocide and imperial racism practiced in the colonies were deployed against European Jews.[1] Another aspect of this scholarship is the focus on memory. Literary scholars have asked how the representation and remembrance of the Holocaust as an event only emerged alongside the recollection, or forgetting, of other histories. To describe these historical imbrications, Michael Rothberg has offered the spatial metaphor of "multidirectional memory" (2009). For instance, Rothberg and Debarati Sanyal have shown how Holocaust memory in France was enabled not only by pivotal events in international Holocaust consciousness, such as the Eichmann trial, but also by France's war in Algeria. A striking number of such readings are contrapuntal, in Said's sense. That is, they involve reading against the grain of the received knowledge of the Holocaust as metropolitan history in order to

1 See, for instance, the essays in Langbehn and Salama 2011. This scholarship often explicitly situates itself in a lineage of midcentury thinkers who discerned early on that the Holocaust was continuous with other aspects of racial modernity; for instance, see Gilroy 2002. Conversely, Aamir Mufti (2007) has shown how a European discourse of Jewishness as minority would influence the making and management of minority populations in the decolonizing world.

show how the supposed "other setting" – that is, the colonial setting – is in fact integral to and thus disruptive of that history's seeming containment (Said 1994: 96).

Rothberg has described multidirectional memory as an attempt to "bring together that which is supposed to be kept apart" (2009: 25) – a project that resonates with Said's description of contrapuntal method in *Culture and Imperialism* as a response to "the problem of connecting things to each other" (Said et al. 1994: 23). Scholars concerned with the historical entanglements of the Holocaust and postcoloniality have generated a whole series of key terms to describe this relation: multidirectional memory (Rothberg 2009), connective histories (Hirsch 2012), palimpsestic memory (Huyssen 2003 and Silverman 2013), *noueds de mémoire* (or knots of memory) (Rothberg, Sanyal, and Silverman 2010), *mémoires croisées* (Lionnet 2010), and transferential memory (Schwab 2010). These are all figures of intersection, overlap, connection, or touching, derived from efforts to show what Said calls the "knotted," "overlapping," and "interconnected" character of "experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development" (1994: 32). In proposing the term contrapuntal memory, both as one term among these others but also as an organizing concept that encompasses the work these various figures do, I am identifying the contrapuntal impulse shared by these recent innovations in Holocaust historiography and memory. As such, this scholarship does not just connect the Holocaust to the histories of decolonization and its aftermaths but emerges out of a specifically postcolonial methodology of reading.[2] This recognition that forms and figures of memory are also strategies of reading helps us to see that recovering these historical connections and intersections depends upon a hermeneutical and political stance that searches for normative meaning in the historical experiences of postcoloniality and anti-Semitism.

The chapter consists of three sections. In the first section, I examine two novels, Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay* and Nathacha Appanah's *Le dernier frère* (*The Last Brother*), that concern the internment of European Jewish refugees in British colonies during the war. These two novels recover and represent the Holocaust's dispersed geography, tracking its implications for the colonies and observing the continuities between the German internment of Jews in Europe and British practices in the empire. Both of these novels make visible how the colonial ordering of the world globalized the Holocaust. In doing so, they self-consciously stage the problem, for their

2 For another account of the methodological origins of these connective practices, see Hirsch's discussion of their grounding in feminist reading practices (2012: 206).

characters but also their readers, of how to reckon with the ethical implications of this alternative cartography.

The second section turns to the role of Holocaust commemoration and the transmission of Holocaust pedagogies in the consolidation of national and European identities. Today, in Western European society, remembering the Holocaust in ways sanctioned by the state and its institutions has become synonymous with affirming the commitment to democracy, human rights, and secularism, all purportedly liberal European values. In a postcolonial Europe shaped by migration, then, one way the assimilability of migrant and minority communities is adjudicated is by whether or not they absorb the moral pedagogy of Holocaust memory. As a counterpoint to this ideological instrumentalization of the Holocaust, I examine two very different responses to this imperative to remember, Boualem Sansal's *Le village de l'Allemand ou le journal des frères Schiller* (*The German Mujahid*, in its American edition) and Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy*.

In the final section, I complicate the idea of 1945 as a distinct temporal threshold and historical rupture in debates on global and world literatures. Even in the immediate aftermath of the war, some of the era's most astute thinkers focused on continuities and the *longue durée*. Critics such as Hannah Arendt and Aimé Césaire were quick to recognize that the Holocaust was not an event outside of time or history but rather a consequence and further development of the race thinking and justifications of imperialism found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European thought and in the practices of colonial governance. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer located the Holocaust as the culmination of the very logic of modernity. Indeed, anticolonial intellectuals such as Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and W. E. B. Du Bois paid close attention to Nazi anti-Semitism and the Jewish genocide precisely because they discerned its relationship to colonial violence and the strictures of the global color line. I turn to Caryl Phillips's *The Nature of Blood*, a novel that represents the Holocaust in ways that are historically discrepant and even anachronistic. Phillips's narrative strategies emplot the Holocaust as one among a series of interrelated events that made global modernity. Such practices of contrapuntal memory emphasize that contrapuntality entails not only a practice of making connections across space or geography but also between past and present.

Contrapuntal Writing between Globe and World

Much recent work on the Holocaust's colonial dimensions has built on Hannah Arendt and Aimé Césaire's insights about colonialism's boomerang

effect (Arendt 1979) or *choc en retour* (Césaire): namely, that the violence fascism inflicted on Europe was the return to European shores of the race thinking and practices of subjugation European colonialism had perpetrated in its overseas colonies. But the idea (apparent particularly in Arendt's writing) that these ideologies migrated from the peripheries back to Europe, where they found their fullest expression, does not account for how thoroughly the purportedly European struggle between fascism and liberalism was felt throughout the colonies. For instance, during the war, German and Italian nationals living in India were interned in British-run camps. Some German Jews, including recent arrivals who had fled the ominous developments in Europe, were counted among these enemy aliens, thus confirming Arendt's observation that the early twentieth century had "created a new kind of human beings – the kind that are put in concentration camps by their foes and in internment camps by their friends" (2007: 265). In India, despite their attempts to argue what one Jewish internee called "the paradox of my position," they were imprisoned along with their co-nationals, and for the duration of the war, "Nazis and anti-fascists lived inches from each other" (Khan 2015: 14). The Indian novelist Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988) takes up this history. Its titular character, Hugo Baumgartner, is a German Jew who flees Germany for India after the Nazis come to power, only to be interned by the British once war breaks out in Europe.

Baumgartner's Bombay is an effort to conceive the Holocaust in contrapuntal relation to British colonialism in India, and to the partition of India and Pakistan. In the novel, Desai seeks to recover and represent the connections that yoke together seemingly disparate sites and histories. But if Desai's text models a contrapuntal stance for the reader, it does so in large part by asking us to draw a contrast between our own capacity to adopt this connective ethos and the inability of the novel's characters to assume such a perspective. In the novel, the figure that best captures these dynamics is that of the globe.

In an episode early in the novel, a kindly teacher offers a young Hugo, the only Jew in a class of Christians opening Christmas presents, "a great ball of red glass" that tops the classroom Christmas tree. Hugo is transfixed, "thinking that if he owned that red glass globe, then he was the owner of the whole world, like a magician" (1988: 35). Yet when it is held out to him he is paralyzed, unable to reach out his hands to take it, not despite but because he is conscious of its "extraordinary worth" (36). Hugo's abashed refusal to take possession of the glass globe, and thus lay claim to the world, reads on its face as a figure for Jewish homelessness. Why had he not accepted, he wonders. "Was it just that he sensed he did not belong to the radiant, the

triumphant of the world?" (36). Read this way, Hugo's sense that the world is not for him foreshadows and allegorizes the plight of the diasporic and now denationalized Jew, turning from the glass globe because he intuits that there is no place on its surface for his inhabitation

This is certainly one aspect of its meaning, but the glass globe that could be grasped in one's hands is also a figure for a certain perspective, one that apprehends the world as a whole, and takes "owner[ship] of the whole world" – not as a "triumphant" conqueror but with a sense of responsibility to this thing of "extraordinary worth." Such a stance might seem to call for the adoption of an impossible point of view, for while one might regard the globe from "above" or "outside" as a representation of the world, no one can actually step outside the world. But in Desai's text, it stands for a deprovincializing ethos. Hugo's missed encounter, as a child, with this point of view serves as an eloquent foreshadowing of the inability he will demonstrate over the course of his tortured travels to understand the historical forces that shape his itinerary.[3]

Some hundred pages after Baumgartner's childhood longing to hold and make that glass globe his own, the figure reappears. In the internment camp, Baumgartner fantasizes about a fellow internee, a German gentile missionary: "He made up a picture of her touching the bowed heads of naked tribal men and women in grass skirts, and at night dreamt of her holding a great glass globe between her fingers in which candlelight was reflected and flickered" (128). The return of the glass globe as a prop in a scene of colonial romance emphasizes that Baumgartner's inability to grasp the meaning of the globe is not primarily a failure to see how the disparate spaces of Europe and the colony are bound together but rather to adopt a historical vision that would discern the connections between Nazism, imperialism, and the coming partition of India, and so find some way to make common cause with others whose lives have been formed and deformed by these events.

Instead, upon emerging from the internment camp at war's end, Baumgartner finds himself in the midst of sectarian riots in the streets of Calcutta, with no inkling of their cause or context: "In the camp, they listened only to the overseas news, they followed the war. Few had shown any interest in or awareness of what was happening in India" (168). And this is hardly an individual failing on the part of one novelistic character; rather, the novel generalizes it and suggests that it is a shared worldview, one that

3 For two readings of this scene in other registers, see Mufti 2007: 251 and Cheyettte 2013: 253.

paradoxically fails to view the world. When Baumgartner seeks out his old friend, a Muslim preparing to flee to East Bengal, the narrative remarks that he "had no more conception of Baumgartner's war, of Europe's war than Baumgartner had of affairs in Bengal, in India" (169). Desai's text invites us, through its contrapuntal reworking of this history, to make the connections Baumgartner and those around him cannot see.

In recent scholarship on the idea of world literature, critics have sought to establish the important distinction between globe and world. For many of these critics, the idea of the globe is limited to a geospatial conception that apprehends the world largely in terms of the economic and informational infrastructure of global capitalism. World, by contrast, retains a normative dimension. It is neither synonymous with nor reducible to the literal surface of the globe, nor to the forms of circulation and market exchange that organize global space.[4] While various authors place differing emphases on what gives world its aesthetic and ethical purchase, the specificity of world turns in part on the human capacity for worlding – a project in which the novel can participate, rather than functioning simply as an object of exchange or circulation in a global marketplace of literature or ideas, or even as the product or reflection of "economic and political interests" (Ganguly 2016: 21). In *Baumgartner's Bombay*, the figure of the globe might seem to refer to the geopolitical and the spatial, insofar as the novel asks us to connect the expulsion of German Jews and internment in British India, or to consider the map of India and Pakistan that will come into existence with Partition. But the figure of the globe in the novel is not a representation of the world understood as maximal spatial expansion and connectedness, nor is it merely geopolitical space, the surface for a set of coordinates whose connections are a matter of mapping. In staging the problem of forging such connections as a problem of the development of a contrapuntal sensibility, the figure of the globe in the novel instead functions as a figure for the human capacity – and failure – to grasp not just historical and material connections but their ethical and political import.

To underscore the centrality of memory for this critical sensibility, I examine the Mauritian novelist Nathacha Appanah's 2010 novel *The Last Brother* (*Le dernier frère* 2007). It, too, concerns the internment of European Jews in a British

4 For an influential take on the globe / world distinction, see Derrida 2002. For a polemical opposition between globe as a depleted spatial category, in contrast to temporality's normative horizon, see Cheah 2016. For an account that differentiates world from globe by considering the worldmaking capacity of aesthetic and literary production, see Ganguly 2016: 69–109.

colony, focusing on the much lesser known history of some 1,500 Jews who were detained in Mauritius for four and half years after being turned back from British Palestine at the end of 1940. Appanah's literary treatment of this episode is both a historical recovery of an outpost of Holocaust and colonial history, as well as an attempt to expand our sense of the map of the Holocaust's geography. Like *Baumgartner's Bombay*, however, it challenges the idea that this is a matter of merely mapping the coordinates of a global history, and it too begins by staging this as the problem of a child's inability to grasp the globe.

The novel is narrated by an elderly Indo-Mauritian, Raj, who recollects his childhood friendship with one of the prisoners, a young boy named David, who comes to stand for the two brothers Raj has lost. If Baumgartner's encounter with his Muslim friend is marked by a mutual historical incomprehension, Raj and David's encounter is characterized by an intimacy that comes from the feeling of a shared experience. Only later does Raj mark the gap between the emotional richness of this affiliative, worldmaking encounter and a child's ignorance of the history that has brought it about:

> I told him I, too, had been on a journey before coming here because that was how I saw things at that age, kilometers and oceans made no difference, both David and I had left the places where we were born and had each followed our parents to a strange, mysterious, and somewhat frightening spot, where we hoped to escape from adversity. I do not know if I ought to be ashamed to say this, but that was how it was: I did not know there was a world war on that had lasted for four years and when David asked me at the hospital if I was Jewish I did not know what it meant. . . . I had never heard of Germany, in reality I knew very little. (Appanah 2010: 64)

What Raj's childhood perspective lacks, then, is a sense of the globe, which would allow him to understand how his own small island is related to a world war that he later marvels at having known nothing of. But while in *Baumgartner's Bombay*, Hugo's childhood inability to grasp the globe is a figure for his subsequent inability, and the inability of those around him, to perceive how their interconnected traumatic itineraries might produce a cosmopolitan and ethical awareness of the multiple histories and worlds being produced by the war, in *The Last Brother*, maturation brings with it the ability for Raj to read his own past contrapuntally. In a trope that we will encounter again in the next section, Raj narrates an incomplete pedagogical encounter with the Holocaust. In a school lesson, a teacher explains the Holocaust, which "incredible as it may seem today . . . was the first time I had ever heard it spoken about" (2010: 158). But the teacher who gives Raj

access to the history of this seemingly distant, metropolitan event is completely unaware of the Jews who were imprisoned on Mauritius, and incredulous at Raj's story of his encounters with them. Raj must supplement official history with the lessons of his own experience and memory.

It is only much later that Raj finally finds official acknowledgment of the island interment. A news article, which retells the story of the Jewish internment, seeks to locate Mauritius on the map of Holocaust history: "It is an item of world history [*l'histoire mondiale*] that remains little known to this day," the article reads. "For, despite its remoteness from Europe, the island of Mauritius did play a role at the time of the Second World War" (2010: 162). Françoise Lionnet has observed that the novel appears to undercut its own commitment to memory as a practice and ethics of encounter by its eventual turn to the archive and to the official record (2010: 117–18).[5] Yet what makes the novel's reimagining of history so potent is that it transmits a lived memory that the adult Raj never finds fully reflected in the archives, despite his efforts (2010: 112–13). To account for this little-known episode of the Holocaust's unfolding requires memory's supplementation of history, and their transmission into literature.

Migration, Assimilation, and Holocaust Pedagogy

In the Introduction to *Orientalism*, Edward Said observes that in writing the book, "by an almost inescapable logic, I have found myself writing the history of a strange, secret sharer of Western anti-Semitism" (1979: 27). Orientalism, he explains, is the "Islamic branch" of anti-Semitism (28), but while "Western anti-Semitism has always included both the Jews and the Muslims . . . the latter have yet to be released from that ideological prison" (1976: 4).[6] Said was hardly unaware of the persistence of anti-Semitism in the postwar world, not least in Europe. What he contested was the ideological sleight of hand by which Muslims (Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular) were made to appear as irredeemably anti-Semitic in a contemporary orientalist discourse

5 Appanah's insistence on such archival verification seems all the more pronounced because, as Lionnet explains, the written source the text presents as though it were a documentary trace is invented and anachronistic (2010: 116–17).

6 See also Said 1979: 262, 286, and the introduction to Kalmar and Penslar 2005, as well as the essays in that volume. As other scholars have tracked, the category of the Semite has indeed fallen into disrepute, but with it too the historic, theological, and philological connections between Arabs and Jews have been put under erasure. On the life and afterlife of the term, see Anidjar 2008 and Hochberg 2016.

that now found it advantageous to forget the historical, theological, and philological connections that bound Arabs and Jews.

Today, in European societies, the consequences of this operation are visible in the contestations around migration and the assimilation of Muslims. In the discourse of not only right-wing nationalists but the liberal mainstream, Muslim Europeans are suspected of being under the sway of what Fatima El-Tayeb calls "anti-Enlightenment migrant fundamentalism" (2011: xvi). They pose a threat, this discourse tells us, to feminism, to sexual minorities, and to Jews. In this milieu, Holocaust pedagogy and commemoration play a very particular role. In Germany, for instance, Muslim migrants are taken to visit concentration camps specifically to "sensitize" them to Holocaust memory – a sensitivity educators and officials fear that they will lack (Stanley-Becker and Rokjov 2017).[7] France, too, has had its own versions of Holocaust pedagogy that aim to assimilate but also exclude (Pellegrini 2008).

In this section, I examine two postcolonial novels that take up versions of these pedagogical dictates but come to very different conclusions about the extent to which the postcolonial subject and the postcolonial literary text should accept this assimilatory imperative. I begin with a discussion of the Algerian writer Boualem Sansal's (2009) novel, The German Mujahid (*Le village de l'Allemand ou le journal des frères Schiller* 2008). In Algeria and in France, Sansal has cast himself as an opponent of what he describes as Islam's fascistic tendencies, and as a vigorous advocate of secularism and assimilation, as well as a critic of the Palestinian struggle. His novel bears the marks of all of these views, and critics have shown how his attempts to deploy Holocaust memory in a comparative frame threaten to collapse into uncontrolled analogies that do not sustain historical or conceptual scrutiny (see Sanyal 2015: 213–64 and Hesse 2016: 181–90). I read the novel as a symptom of the ideological struggles over migrant and minority communities' relations to Holocaust memory in contemporary Europe. While Sansal largely reiterates the notion that French Muslims' fitness for inclusion in the nation can be measured by their relationship to Holocaust memory, the novel's most playful and perceptive moments show how this idea has been elevated to a cliché that sanitizes France's own

7 The Turkish-German writer Zafer Şenocak has described this responsibility to remember the Holocaust as something both imposed from above but also to be accepted and entered into on the part of migrants; a memory work he calls "migration into other pasts." This chapter does not permit me the space to engage fully with the long and complex history of Holocaust memory and its intersection with Turkish labor migration to Germany, but see Şenocak 2000; Huyssen 2003; Adelson 2005; and Rothberg and Yildiz 2011.

role in the Holocaust. At the same time, Sansal situates his novel as an instance of enlightened engagement with Holocaust memory, and an example of how migrant and postcolonial subjects might productively incorporate official and unofficial Holocaust pedagogies as an aspect of their political consciousness. The vehicle for this claim is his intertextual engagement with the Italian Jewish writer and Holocaust memoirist Primo Levi. As such, Sansal's novel is an engagement not only with the contested memory of the Holocaust in postcolonial Europe but also with Holocaust literature as world literature.

The novel purports to be the diaries of two brothers, Rachel (Rachid Helmut) and Malrich (Malek Ulrich) Schiller, sons of an Algerian mother and a German father, who live in the Paris suburbs. It is the mid-1990s, and there is civil war in Algeria. When their parents are murdered by jihadists, Rachel, the elder brother, discovers that their German father was a Nazi officer – a chemical engineer who helped develop the gas chambers, and who fled after the war to North Africa. Thus begins Rachel's quest to unearth his father's role in the Final Solution and to reconstruct how he found safe harbor in Algeria. This accounting culminates in an act of atonement and (over)identification; Rachel shaves his head, dons striped pajamas, and gasses himself in his garage. His diary is passed on to Malrich, who, taking seriously the lesson that what has happened once can happen again, sets himself the task of prying his own community out from under the influence of a radical Imam.

The novel's narrative is didactic, or rather, autodidactic. The two diaries are a record of the brothers' self-education in Holocaust history and memory. Malrich, a high-school dropout, explains that it is his brother's diary, and not the French school system, that has inducted him into the knowledge of this past: "I know it sounds incredible, but I didn't know anything about the war, the extermination [*cette affaire d'extermination*]. I'd heard bits and pieces, things the imam said about the Jews and other stuff I'd picked up here and there. I always thought it was like a legend, something that happened hundreds of years ago" (Sansal 2009: 46). The novel reiterates clichés about Muslim anti-Semitism and the erasure of the Holocaust in Arab nations, seeming to capitalize on the ideologically charged notion that French Muslims have a defective relationship to liberal values symptomatized by their obtuseness to the discourses of Holocaust memory. Indeed, it is their lineage as the Algerian-*German* sons of a German father that compels them to shed their ignorance and practice that supposedly quintessential German art of "coming to terms with the past."[8]

8 As Sanyal argues, while the novel concerns itself at length with German culpability and Arab complicity in the Holocaust, it has almost nothing to say about French colonialism in Algeria (2015: 257–61).

Yet there are also moments when Sansal productively plays with these clichés and deflates the idea that contemporary European claims to moral authority and a culture of human rights are based on an oh-so-rigorous accounting of past perpetration and collaboration. Rachel, walking through the *banlieue* with a bag full of books on the Holocaust, muses to himself: "If the cops had stopped me, I'd have been screwed, I'd have had a hard time explaining my obsession [*ma passion*] with books about exterminating the Jews" (2009: 120). This wry observation subtly ironizes the xenophobic talking point that young French Muslim men all pose a danger to Jews. More tellingly, Rachel's un-hyphenated French wife remarks, "It wasn't us who killed the Jews, why are you so interested in it?" (2009: 80, trans. modified). Questions of who is responsible to and for the past in postcolonial Europe thus reveal themselves to be more complex than official narratives of commemoration and nationhood allow.

By staging the insufficiency of Algerian and migrant reckonings with the Holocaust but also puncturing pieties about France's historical innocence, Sansal situates his novel as an instance of the successful incorporation of the lessons of the Holocaust. Sansal's approach to Holocaust memory follows the logic of what Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider have characterized as the "cosmopolitan memory" of the Holocaust. While the term would seem to imply a structure similar to the contrapuntal, multidirectional, or connective approaches I have been discussing, Levy and Sznaider's account of cosmopolitan memory in fact depends on the characterization of the Holocaust as an unprecedented event that can function as a universal norm and reference point for the memory of other struggles. In Sansal's novel, the irreducible uniqueness and singular horror of the Holocaust is affirmed repeatedly; it is from the brothers' sense that they are "carrying the weight of the greatest tragedy the world has ever known" that the novel insists on its moral stakes, and on the drama of remembering, atonement, and possible redemption. But if, as in Levy and Sznaider's account, Holocaust memory provides access to a properly cosmopolitan sphere of political and cultural discourse, then by extension, to lay claim to Holocaust memory is to lay claim to a kind of universal literary value (see Vermeulen 2017). The novel's credentials for such a project are secured by its sustained intertextual engagement with the Italian Jewish writer Primo Levi, who is among the most canonical and respected authors of Holocaust testimony and literature.

Levi's poem "Shemà" (which also opens his classic Auschwitz memoir *If This Is a Man*) appears partway through the text.[9] The poem concerns the

9 Isabelle Hesse has pointed out that the British edition of Sansal's novel is titled *Unfinished Business*, after another Primo Levi poem, and that this edition, unlike either the French original or the American edition, includes the poem as an epigraph (2016: 184). "For an

transmission of memory; that is, the imperative to make known what happened in the camps. But it is also a poem about the failure of transmission and, with it, broken genealogies. After describing the conditions that prevail in the camp, Levi entreats the reader:

> Consider that this has been:
> I commend these words to you.
> Engrave them on your hearts
> When you are in your house, when you walk on your way,
> When you go to bed, when you rise.
> Repeat them to your children.
> Or may your house crumble,
> Disease render you powerless,
> Your offspring avert their faces.

To this poem, Rachel adds his own stanza, in an act of literary emendation and extrapolation, which begins with the words "The children do not know" and ends with the line "My father told me nothing" (Sansal 2009: 62, trans. modified). While Rachel's addition describes a break in memorial transmission and thus a generational rupture, his extension of Levi's poem situates him – and of course Sansal's novel itself – within another genealogy, that of Holocaust literature as a potentially universal patrimony.

While Sansal's novel turns to the Holocaust in the service of cultural and literary assimilation, Ama Ata Aidoo's 1977 prose poem *Our Sister Killjoy* puts Holocaust memory to very different ends. In Aidoo's text, the Jewish genocide is a figure for the limits and dangers of diasporic life. A young Ghanaian student, Sissie, travels to Germany and to Britain, where she encounters other Africans determined to make a life for themselves in Europe, and to pursue the upward mobility such migration seems to offer. Sissie's journey also has a pedagogical and auto-didactic dimension; against the intentions of her German hosts, who imagine that a trip to Europe is a rare educative opportunity for a young African woman, Sissie formulates a counter-pedagogical critique that she derives from her own observations of Europe's racism and history of barbarism. For instance, when a German informs her that Germans, the Irish, and Africans are united in their oppression, she is stunned into silence, and "could not ask him whether . . . there are or could have been some other oppressed peoples on the earth, like Afro-Americans or Amerindians or Jews. She forgot to ask / Her Most Learned

English-speaking audience," she notes, "Primo Levi plays a key role in introducing, and validating, a narrative about the Holocaust" (2016: 203, n.1).

Guest / If he had heard of / Buchenwald, / or come across / Dachau / even in his reading?" (93–94). It is in part this awareness of Europe's racist history that allows Sissie to resist the lure of migration and impels her to return home. Aidoo's text, like Sansal's, is sharply polemical. But while *The German Mujahid* lays claim to a European public sphere and a transnational reading public by situating itself within a body of Holocaust literature, Aidoo's text finds in the history of Europe's Jews evidence that the postcolonial African subject must fortify him or herself against the allure of migration and the seductive delusion that one might come to belong in Europe. The task, she writes to an interlocutor who insists his future is in Europe, is instead to produce a language in which "you and I could share our hopes, our fears and our fantasies, without feeling inhibited because we suspect that someone is listening" (115). Aidoo's project is thus the production of a national and an African literature.

Before 1945: Backshadows or Prehistories?

In *The Burden of Memory, The Muse of Forgiveness*, Wole Soyinka reflects on what he calls "the yet unconcluded business of racism" (1999: 4). He critiques the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's policy of reconciliation in lieu of restitution and emphasizes the necessity of reparations – cultural and monetary – not just in South Africa but elsewhere on the African continent and in the United States, for the transatlantic slave trade. Reparations, he writes, are "a structure of memory" (39) and a "critique of history" (83), and as he makes the case for their potency he turns to a comparison: "It is not possible to ignore the example of the Jews and the obsessed commitment of survivors of the Holocaust, and their descendants, to recover both their material patrimony and the humanity of which they were brutally deprived" (83). Why, he asks, has the same imperative towards reparations not taken hold in the case of the slave trade? Time, he explains, is used as "an annulling distinction" to deny the continued import of what is cast as ancient history (83). But there is "no statute of limitations" on historical reckoning. "A surely antiquated wrong against Spanish jewry . . . the 1492 edict of Ferdinand and Isabella that evicted Jews from Spain – was redressed only last year by the Spanish government. Export of the first slave from the West African coast predated this by only fifty years, and the full-blown European entry into the commerce did not begin until the seventeenth century" (91). Soyinka merely sets these histories alongside one another in a comparative fashion but in fact, the historical coevalness of

these events – as well as the temporal coincidence of the expulsion of Jews and (later) Muslims from Spain and Columbus's voyage to the Americas – establishes a frame for contrapuntal memory work. In this context, I examine the British-Caribbean writer Caryl Phillips's novel *The Nature of Blood* (1997), whose experiments with time and form situate the Holocaust within a longer history of racial modernity.

Phillips's novel intersperses several different narrative strands and voices. Two of these are set in late-medieval or early modern Venice. One concerns the historical 1480 blood libel in the Venetian town of Portobuffole, and the other is a reworking of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Other strands concern a German Jewish woman in Nazi Germany, and an Ethiopian Jewish woman in 1990s Israel. My interest here is in the way that the two Venetian narratives speak to what Jonathan Boyarin has argued is the long project of making Christianity coterminous with the region we call "Europe" via the assimilation or, more often, expulsion, of Jews and Muslims. The narration of the blood libel in Portobuffole, and the inquisitorial terror visited on the Jewish community in its aftermath, is striking for its incorporation of Holocaust tropes. Yellow stars, bodies burning into ash and in chimneys, and knowing asides voiced by the unmarked narrator all threaten to collapse the novel's discrete timelines into one teleological unfolding. Historically, Phillips's narrative thus appears to treat the Holocaust as "the continuation of antisemitism through other means," instead of registering its clearly modern character (Bauman 1988: 470), while formally, it practices what Michael André Bernstein has called "backshadowing," a concept he develops with particular reference to the Holocaust: "When an event is so destructive for a whole people . . . as was the Shoah," he writes, "there is an almost irresistible pressure to interpret it as one would a tragedy, to regard it as the simultaneously inconceivable and yet foreordained culmination of the entire brutal history of European anti-Semitism" (10). Such a strategy is ethically and narratively suspect, in Bernstein's argument, and historically incoherent, in Bauman's view, for it fails to register crucial temporal thresholds and historical ruptures, the before and after of which must be respected as discrete times that demand discrete analyses. In other words, it fails to periodize.

Phillips's novel, however, performs a different kind of narrative and historical operation. The points of contact it establishes between medieval blood libels, the exclusion or assimilation of Jews, blacks, and Muslims in early modern Europe, and the Holocaust do not work to establish historical causality, or even continuity. Rather, they demonstrate the way that the discrepant, uneven, and connective making and remaking of race and racialization disrupt the neat periodization of modernity and its thresholds. In

contrast to those accounts that insist there is a clear line to be drawn between premodern religious differences and modern race thinking, Phillips's text explores the continued entanglement of race and religion, and shows the wholly modern instrumentalization of racial difference for the consolidation of state power and early capitalism in early modern Venice. His text thus works against precisely that "annulling distinction" of the passage of time that Soyinka invokes, which allows some histories to retain purchase on the present, while others are consigned to prehistory. The novel is thus a powerful example of the way that postcolonial treatments of Holocaust memory practice not just contrapuntal reading but contrapuntal memory. It prompts us to recognize that grasping the significance of the Holocaust for postcoloniality requires thinking both after and before 1945.

In this chapter, I have argued that characterizing the relationship between Holocaust memory and postcolonial worlds as contrapuntal helps us to see the recent scholarly interest in these overlapping histories as methodologically and politically continuous with one of postcolonial theory's foundational critical impulses. I have also argued, through the readings of the novels I discuss in this chapter, that contrapuntality is a structure of memory. To read contrapuntally is to recover connections and entanglements that may be little registered, forgotten, or symptomatic in the archive, but which are also neglected or even suppressed in subsequent critical and historical practice. Often, this neglect is in the service of what Said describes as exclusive histories that depend on the segregation of one group's experience from another, producing what Rothberg calls "competitive memory." The work of reconnecting these experiences, and of remembering the past contrapuntally, then, can be the basis for fashioning political presents and futures adequate to the task of imagining a shared world.

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8

World Literature after 1989: Revolutions in Motion

VILASHINI COOPPAN

With the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, a border that had been central to the postwar gridding of the globe seemed to give way to another geopolitical order. Iron become stone and stone mere rubble, now visible in the remnant of the wall that snakes along the old Stasi headquarters, followed by tourists who run their hands against it and sometimes, still, hope to pocket some bit of rock as testament to the end of the Cold War. The date is something of a hinge point, signaling the decisive exit from a bipolar world zoned by curtains and the solid entry into a triumphant globalization and what Mikhail Gorbachev and George H. W. Bush were quick to call "a new world order." It was in 1989 that Francis Fukuyama declared "the end of history" in the form of the "unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism" (1989: 3). What "post-1989" has come to signify is a period marked, on the one hand, by an embrace of capitalist democracy's globalizing flows and the hyperconnectivity catalyzed by the creation, also in that fateful year, of the World Wide Web, and, on the other hand, the grim explosion of ethnic and religious genocide, militarized and mediatized war technologies, global terror, domestic immiseration, ecological-planetary catastrophe, a world refugee crisis, and "a concomitant globalization of human rights culture."[1]

Informational capitalism and widespread sectarianism and separatism together gridded the globe with an ineluctable tension between homogenization and heterogenization, universality and particularity, triumphal assurance and despair, fear, and grief in a post-trauma condition. To think the "world" in world literature post-1989 is to take this global grid's measure, tracing the lines that variously divide and connect a planet's worth of persons, goods, information, forms, genres, and affects. The "world" post-1989 is further accessible, in Debjani Ganguly's formulation, through "theorizations

1 See Ganguly 2016 for an extended contemplation of these shifts.

of the contemporary not as an epochal term in the sense of being fixated on ideas of the 'new' and the 'revolutionary' like the term *modernity*, but rather as a structure of temporality that illuminates the present through a remediation of the recent past and that conceives of modernity itself as already becoming historical" (2016: 6). The fall of the Berlin Wall, while only one marker of the post-1989 era, nonetheless captures in the monumental language of symbolism the structure of temporality (haunting) and spatiality (crosshatched division/connection) that this chapter proposes as *the mode of 1989*, a mode through which to reconsider the disciplinary history and theory of world literature.

Is the world in *Weltliteratur* the same as the world in globalization's global? To say "yes" would be to take the flows of global capital as *the* animating force of the world-scale thinking that marks world literature's post-1989 rise. This has seemed for some critics to be the effect of Franco Moretti's maps and charts of literary circulation and Pascale Casanova's survey of literary capital emanating from a literary capital, Paris. However, insofar as the global was being thought in multiple ways in and around 1989, the answer to the question and the model of the method are more complicated. As described by David Harvey, Arjun Appadurai, Anthony Giddens, and others, globalization is the acceleration of spatiotemporal connection under late capitalist postmodernity. Globalization's effects were much debated through the 1990s, with some describing mass standardization while others heralded a global modern marked by transverse cultural connections, the proliferation of differences, and syncretism.[2] Globalization's mixed nature combined universalism and particularism, sameness and difference, homogenization and heterogenization. This cross-hatching led Stuart Hall to call for *relational* thinking, thinking alive to how "the global/local reciprocally re-organise and re-shape one another," as well as to the staying power of the nation-form amidst all declarations of its globalized bypassing (Hall 1996: 246). It is this cross-hatched spatiality, alongside the haunted temporality that reveals one moment's globalization to be the return of an earlier moment's, that I call the mode of 1989.

There is a sense of that spatiotemporal doubling in the notion that one of 1989's emblematic events, the breaching of a fictive border propped up by nationalist and economic ideologies of distinction and the heralding of a new era of interconnection, happened in Germany, where a century and a half

2 On the standardizing aspects of global culture and global capitalism, see Amin 1997; Bauman 1998; and Stiglitz 2003. On globalization's heterogenizing effects, see Robertson 1992 and Hannerz 1996.

earlier Goethe, facing the rising tide of ever more aggressive nationalisms in post-Napoleonic Europe, imagined *Weltliteratur*. In one of the twenty or so allusions in personal journals, public lectures, letters, and reported conversations in which the idea of *Weltliteratur* surfaced, Goethe identified its goal: "not that the nations shall think alike, but that they should become aware of each other, and that even where there can be no mutual affection there should be tolerance." An early assembler and translator of the idea of *Weltliteratur*, Fritz Strich, characterized it as "a traffic in ideas between peoples, a literary market to which the nations bring their intellectual treasures for exchange" (Strich 1949: 5). Seen from above (a perspective that post-1989 world literature theory has also been charged with adopting), the original version of *Weltliteratur* saw not borders and walls but trade and tolerance in a global market marked by the seemingly free and strikingly familiar flows of exchange. Comparative literature's late-twentieth-century return to *Weltliteratur* indeed hailed Goethe's prescience, most notably in John Pizer's reading of *Weltliteratur* as an early version of contemporary globalization (Pizer 2000: 216–18). Just as prescient, to my mind, was Goethe's underlying conviction on the staying power of nationalist thinking, whose specter is again haunting Europe and elsewhere with a troubling renewal of the call for borders, fences, and walls. What Goethe, in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, and the fall of the Berlin Wall, at the start of the last decade of the twentieth century, both point to is the inevitable imbrication of the national with the cosmopolitan and the global. I take this imbrication to be another central aspect of world literature in the mode of 1989.

Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur* as a class of texts that simultaneously expressed their national origins and transcended them could not have come into being without Herder's positing, some decades earlier, of a distinctive language, literature, character, and spirit proper to each nation. Such magical animation of national spirits lies behind the projects of European territorial imperialism. In the latter's form of *nation-thinking*, Aamir Mufti argues in *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literature* (2016), the rich heterogeneities of vast areas and the cultures, languages, and genres they contain are flattened into national literatures, so that Sanskritic India yields its Shakespeare (Kalidasa), the Urdu poetic tradition offers its version of Western lyric (*ghazal*), and an entire subcontinental tradition is made to measure Western categories. Srinivas Aravamudan's *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* (2011) offers another account of this history, focused more on a *Weltliteratur*-style bridging of differences and

critique of European irrationality via the heterogeneric corpus that fascinated eighteenth-century European intellectuals (Goethe preeminently). I am concerned primarily with the structure of knowing diagnosed and contested here, one that reverberates all the way to the period of the post-1989. Writing in *The Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999), Gayatri Spivak anatomizes the structure cleanly, naming "the arrogance of the radical European humanist conscience, which will consolidate *itself* by imagining the other, or, as Sartre puts it, 'redo in himself the other's project,' through the collection of information" (171). And, she dryly adds in a hallmark take-down of world literature, "much of our literary critical globalism cannot even qualify to the conscientiousness of this arrogance."

We know this drill: other literatures and cultures are recognized, occasionally valorized, and regularly datafied, in order that their existence in some temporal anteriority and/or spatial exteriority may secure the privileged narratives and categories of the West: progress and civilization, democracy and human rights, genres, periods, eras, canons. The 1990s offered an updated version of this intellectual orient(al)ing, as the West stood back from genocidal conflicts in the Balkans and Rwanda that seemed, in the language of Samuel Huntington-type anatomists of the so-called "clash of civilizations," to be strictly primitive in their archaic and obscure passions. The non-West effectively *disappears* at the very moment it is "recognized," subjected to a cognition that freezes and fixes it or, as Spivak says, "refracts" an "incommensurable and discontinuous other into a domesticated other that consolidates the imperialist self" (130).

To catch this colonial sleight of hand, I turn to another ghost, not Herder's national spirit undergirding nation-thinking and empire building but Derrida's revolutionary specter. *Specters of Marx* (1993) describes the specter as an entity that puts us into contact with "the furtive and ungraspable visibility of the invisibility, or an invisibility of a visible X" (Derrida 1994: 7). The specter's veiling function or *visor effect*, after Hamlet's father's ghost, constitutes its presence as absence. "Nor does one see in flesh and blood this Thing that is not a thing, this thing that is invisible between its apparitions, when it reappears. This Thing meanwhile looks at us and sees us not seeing it even when it is there. A spectral asymmetry interrupts here all specularity. It de-synchronizes, it recalls us to anachrony" (6). This spectral sleight of hand, by magicking away flesh and blood (real) presence and causing things long absent to return, not only places us under a law (of the father) that demands we listen but also places us in flickering contact with a structure of temporality. What the latter has to tells us is that we are never only where we think we are in time. "There are several times of the specter," for each coming is

a simultaneous coming back to where we await that which is always still to come (99). Thus, there can be no end of history on the specter's watch and via the specter's visored look. This line occurs in chapter 4 of *Specters*, "In the name of the revolution, the double barricade," which opens with an epigraph from Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* identifying June, 1848, as "a thing apart, and almost impossible to class in the philosophy of history" (95). "The spirit of revolution," continues Hugo, "covered with its cloud that summit whereon growled this voice of the people which is like the voice of God; a strange majesty emanated from that titanic hodful of refuse . . . it attacked in the name of the Revolution, what? the Revolution."

The spirit of all revolution, Derrida goes on to show, is no spirit but a specter. As such, it veils its appearance (the logic of a simultaneous visibility/invisibility) and doubles its presence (it *is* what it *undoes*, it *undoes* what it *is*). Like the ghost of Hamlet's father, the spectral spirit of the revolution signals the possibility of a revolution that is still (was always still) "to come." Derrida wrote these words in a moment – the apparent "end" of Communism after 1989 – when leftist intellectuals required this hope. Ironically (surely history's preferred mode), Derrida's despairing catalogue of that moment has become, if anything, *even more present*, even more where we are now. Recall his diagnosis in 1993 of "a time when a new world order is attempting to install its neo-capitalism and neo-liberalism," a time subject to such "plagues" as foreign debt, economic and ethnic wars, the exclusion and containment of noncitizens, and the rise of rogue states and terror regimes, a time radically *out of joint*. This time is our time, but that is not because time has moved on, forward, ahead from 1989 to now. The specter operates precisely *not* "according to the linear succession of a before and an after" but "between a present-past, a present-present, and a present-future, between a 'real time' and a 'deferred time'" (39).

To consider world literature after 1989 from the vantage point of the specter is to begin with what Derrida intuits as "the doubtful contemporaneity of the present to itself." In this mode, any synchronic slice of time also unfolds in a diachronic sweep. It is not as lines, however, but as breaks, fissures, rents, layerings, foldings, and coverings over that spectrality's temporal processes happen. Any present is necessarily striated by other places and times. It is in this spirit that I turn to such spectral phenomena as (1) how world literature "looks" (cartographic metaphors have been central), (2) how world literature's gaze has been understood to occlude the very things it would refocus our attention on (the non-West, the literary, the work of reading, alternative epistemologies), and (3) how world literature's discursive

field comprises hauntings, repetitions, and returns. Like the remnants of the Berlin Wall, simultaneously marking a new order and a ghostly, lingering prehistory, world literature after 1989 is a category that requires being *here* and *there* simultaneously. A linear history of how we got *here* from *there* looks back for the already written script of what lies ahead. We might call this world literature in the eschatological mode, a structuring of disciplinary history as predictive outcome in which, for example, Goethean *Weltliteratur*'s flows are fully realized in contemporary globalization. World literature in the mode of 1989, by contrast, turns back to that moment's constitutive doubleness, its haunted temporality and cross-hatched spatiality, as the locus of a permanent revolution or a revolution in motion. Reading world literature in this way, we keep coming back, even as we move forward, to a series of problematics seeking to link, from Goethe's time to ours, literature's work to the globe's materialities.

Spring Forward, Fall Back: A Calendar of World Literature Days

If world literature has taught us anything about time, it is that no period exists as a distinct, autonomous slice. Any attempt at periodization is haunted by prior slicing and dicing, linking, and breaking. So the post-89 has to be the pre-89, perhaps is always *some kind of 89*, some perpetual overturning ghosted by the coming back around of the past. This is the fall back/leap forward movement that Walter Benjamin captured in his image of the French Revolution's citation of ancient Rome as simultaneously a version of fashion's "nose for the topical . . . the tiger's leap into the past" and the essence of dialectical materialism's revolutionary "leap in the open air of history" (Benjamin 2003: 395). Critical fields come into fashion too, and pass out of it, subject like so many *modes* to the fashion cycle of constant adoption, imitation, and abandonment (see Simmel 2000 and Veblen 2007). To pinpoint, as this section does, a series of moments when world literature was in style is to catalogue what vision of the new it promised and what return of the old it activated, and beyond that, what way of being in the world it enacted.

For this accelerated review of field-forming formulations, I adopt the fanciful form of a calendar of days. Remarking on the French Revolution's introduction of a new calendar, in another thesis in "On the Concept of History," Benjamin characterizes the calendar as always the marker of continuity with the past. A calendar's first day "presents history in time-lapse mode," while the recurring

days of remembrance function as "monuments of a historical consciousness" that has also vanished. Benjamin then contrasts the dead weight of the calendar, a version of historicism's devotion to an "'eternal' image of the past," with a day on which time breaks. His example is the first evening of fighting in the July Revolution of 1848, when the dials on clock towers were simultaneously fired upon from multiple points in Paris (2003: 395–96). The calendar of world literature days that follows is a microhistory of critical salvos. If not exactly revolutionary in effect, they are strictly revolutionary in *form*, offering a version of newness that turns back (the tiger's leap into the past) even as it halts, fires, and marches forward. This calendar springs forward but equally falls back, oscillating between times. Don't tear the pages off in mere sequential marking. Flip them instead, as in a child's thumb-sized book, and watch as something else appears – the skeletal form of a spectral field.

Page one: Goethe's vision of *Weltliteratur* as a conversation conducted between nations through their most representative and greatest works of literature, a vision that at once overflows national boundaries and reconfirms them. Page two: Goethe's announcement, in an 1827 letter, that "the age of world literature is beginning, and everybody should contribute to its advent." Page three: Marx and Engels declare, twenty years later in *The Communist Manifesto*, "national one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the many national and local literatures, a world literature arises." Jump a century ahead to 1952's page, when fellow German Erich Auerbach reanimates Goethe's lost ideal of *Weltliteratur* in a world strictly gridded by Cold War divides between a communist East and a democratic West, marked by the decay of "the inner bases of national existence," yet woefully bereft of cosmopolitan ideals. In an anticipation of contemporary information culture's data explosion, Auerbach's essay "Philology and *Weltliteratur*" further noted the "superabundance" of literary material beyond the grasp of any single individual and the incursion of new methods and concepts into philological research.

With World War II's shadow still looming and its legacy of a dichotomized, propagandizing world order rapidly entrenching, Auerbach bemoaned the loss of that "spiritual exchange between peoples" and "reconciliation of races" toward which Goethe had yearned (Auerbach 1969: 6–7). The Cold War's binary contraction of culture demanded, for Auerbach, an inverse movement ("the more our earth grows closer together, the more must historicist synthesis balance the contraction by expanding its activity," 17). As a practical correlative of this method, Auerbach proposed readings of literature animated by "a point

of departure [*Ansantzpunkt*], a handle, as it were, by which the subject can be seized," but from which it necessarily expands. *Ansantzpunkte* are chosen styles of reading, emanating from a "firmly circumscribed, easily comprehensible set of phenomena whose interpretation is a radiation out from them and which orders and interprets a greater region than they themselves occupy" (13–14). The points of departure are various: "a semantic interpretation, a rhetorical trope, a syntactic sequence, the interpretation of one sentence, or a set of remarks made at a given time and in a given place."

What interests me is the central location of the work of reading within the material-political field of the postwar world. Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* ([1946] 1991) reads as an experiment in centrifugal interpretation. At its largest, the book provided, in Hayden White's words, "the diachronic 'plot' of the history of western literature" (1996: 129). But its *ansantzpunkt* was humble; in Auerbach's words, "a book written by a particular person in a particular place during the early 1940's."[3] In the Istanbul where Auerbach sought refuge from Nazi Germany "the libraries were not good," and so the book radiated out from close readings of major works Auerbach had to hand. Istanbul also encrypted a sense of exilic dislocation, the terrors of nationalism, the dark shadow of war, and the saving beacon of alliance, from all of which postwar comparative literature surfaced itself.[4] This pathos lingers on six years later in "Philology and *Weltliteratur*," even as Auerbach imagines the saving possibility of a connected world in which "our philological home is the earth; it can no longer be the nation" (1969: 17). This vision of cosmopolitan affiliation rippling out via *Weltliteratur*, like radiation waves from some softer, stateless bomb, found ploddingly bureaucratic expression a decade later in one of the laboratories of the new American comparative literature.

Flip the page to 1964: Auerbach's fellow emigré Werner Friederich, founder of the Program in Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina, addresses a conference about the new discipline. Analogizing programs of comparative literature to the "departments of Foreign Affairs" that "every well-run government" maintains for the "constant scrutiny of its political and cultural relationships with the nations around it," Friederich took comparativism as statecraft, "a political creed" but also, even in this policy-speak, as a utopian alternative to "the narrowness of ever so much in

3 Auerbach, "Epilegomena zu Mimesis," 1953, as quoted in Lindenberger 1996: 199, note 17.

4 On the history of *Mimesis*'s exilic production, see Said 1999: 5–9; Mufti 1998; and Apter 2006: 41–64.

merely nationally conceived literary scholarship" (Friederich 1970a: 36, 47–48). Though Friederich advocated Great Books courses over the "awfully facile and arrogant concept of World Literature courses" (doomed to deliver only "snippets" and "samples" of "NATO-literature . . . from ancient Greece through the Mediterranean and German literatures to the modern Anglo-Americans"), there remains a Goethean logic to Friederich's vision, with its insistence on a national-cultural essence that finds expression in literary greatness and its equal reliance on the analogization of literary and political structures (Friederich 1970b: 30–31). Friederich's fellow emigré critic René Wellek also dismissed the World Literature course as an "indiscriminate smattering, a vague, sentimental cosmopolitanism" but reserved his greatest opprobrium for those (like Friedrich) who espoused literary comparativism as politics by other means (Wellek and Warren 1962: 41). Literature, Wellek begged to differ, operates "not as an argument in the warfare of cultural *prestige*, or as a commodity of foreign trade, or even as an indicator of national psychology" but rather as something concerned with "the nature of art and poetry, its victory over human mortality and destiny, its creation of a new world of the imagination [in which] national vanities will disappear" (Wellek 1963: 282–95).

What goes around comes around. The postwar World Literature course debate foregrounded something to which post-1989 World Literature has regularly returned, namely, the relationship between literature and politics, and beyond that, the status of reading within world literature. With less philosophical humanism than Wellek but equal investment in the literariness of literature, Spivak's *Death of a Discipline* (2003) identified the danger of world literature method (epitomized by Franco Moretti) that privileged the mapping of literary flows, like so many forms of capital, over the work of slow, patient reading that refuses to know its meaning in advance. Spivak's riposte to "the arrogance of the cartographic reading of world lit. in translation as the task of Comparative Literature" entailed a brief against anglophonism, novel-centrism, and a vague globalism whose territorial spread and world-systems-style flow analytics has displaced deep language and literature work (Spivak 2003: 72, 108). If for Wellek literature was not politics, for Spivak "literature is not system." We might also consider how much the literary landscape has changed since Friederich's coinage of "NATO literature." What of minority discourse, third world literature, postcolonial literature, human rights literature, post-atrocity and post-trauma literature, and more? The list is long, its supporting and animating critical bibliography too extensive to enumerate here, and its field-forming work still becoming a *part* (as opposed to the excluded other) of world literature theory. A differently worlded world

literature is one textured by many things undreamt of in Goethe's philosophy: diaspora and exile, colonialism and postcolonialism, the struggles of small countries, minor languages, and emergent literatures against the hegemons of Western Literature. The very texts that have critiqued world literature for its blindness to these things (Spivak's *Death of a Discipline*, Emily Apter's *Against World Literature* [2013], and Pheng Cheah's *What Is a World?* [2016]) have fundamentally reshaped the way world literature is being *done*. It is worth thinking of world literature not as descriptive ontology (a catalogue of *what* world literature *is*, a calendar of how it *became*) but rather as critical epistemology, a way of looking, thinking, reading, knowing.

The spectrality of this epistemology flickers out from the last calendar page, Fredric Jameson's "Third World Literature in the Age of Multinational Capitalism" (1986). Urging "the reinvention, in a new situation, of what Goethe long ago theorized as 'world literature'" through "some specific engagement with the question of Third-World Literature," Jameson simultaneously noted the "obsessive return of the national situation itself, the name of the country that returns again and again like a gong" (Jameson 1986: 68). No world without nation. Jameson's argument for the necessarily national-allegorical dimension of third world literature is well known, indeed notorious. I have elsewhere addressed both the essay's homogenizing of postcolonial literatures and its presentation, via allegory's gaps and discontinuities, of a leverageable space for the theorization of differences (Cooppan 2009). My concern here is with the pattern of return. Gong, clang, clank – the spectral echoing of the category of world literature across time, a skeleton of a method. *Weltliteratur* is a disciplinary haunt or crypt, a place to which scholarship returns to look and wonder, to touch the past and draw out of it some logic for the present. Beneath its skin and in its bones the category of world literature comes, like Hamlet's father's ghost, with a question to pose, a question that has been its beginning and that will doubtless outlive its end. How does the "world" in world literature relate to the world itself, with its political and economic structures, its cultural processes, its aesthetic output and ideological input?

Commenting on the larger discourse of globalization that imprinted literary studies in the 1990s, Paul Jay notes the existence of "a curricular world organized along the lines of a political map, the borders of which have neatly duplicated those between modern nation-states" (Jay 2001: 32). In this curricular world, national thinking prevails, undergirding a critical narrative of homogenous, continuous "traditions," great and otherwise, as well as the institutional logic that subdivided universities into distinct departments of

national literatures and a comparative literature that has historically confined its work to a selective exchange among "like," predominantly European, traditions. With the possibility that literatures may not follow the naturalized lines of territorial maps came a generational endeavor, of which world literature was one product, to remap literary movement – crossing over and through the porous lines of language and culture, nation and region, a field cross-hatched by contact and networked, like the new World Wide Web, by global connection. If world literature's post-1989 architects had connection on the brain, it was partly because Goethe's founding vision of *Weltliteratur*'s global marketplace of exchange had entered a globalized world that appeared to have realized, even virtualized, it. However, to note this doubling or return is not to produce world literature's self-sameness over time. Indeed, I hope to have shown that world literature has long been a sign for the doing of difference: reading other texts, in other ways, for other reasons, than those which we have inherited.

The History of a Method

> "Don't delude yourself," writes Stendhal of his favourite character; "for you, there is no middle road." The same is true for us.
>
> *(Moretti 2000)*

The "you" is *Le Rouge et le noir*'s Julien Sorel, the aspiring nineteenth-century bourgeois who hopes to conquer Paris despite his provincial origins, the "us" is comparative literature, and the path that must be chosen is attack, "a permanent intellectual challenge" to the hegemony of national literatures. "If comparative literature is not this, it's nothing." Moretti had previously specified, like Goethe before him, a class of "*world* texts" whose "geographical frame of reference is no longer the nation-state, but a broader entity – a continent, or the world-system as a whole" (Moretti 1996: 50). The phenomenon inspires the method laid out in *Modern Epic: The World-System from Goethe to García Márquez* (1996): a "possible geography of literary forms" in which the core and the periphery are dominated by the distinct genres of novel and epic. The latter, with its "global ambition" and non-homogenous nature, dominates peripheral zones like Goethe's divided Germany, Melville's emergent America, Joyce's colonized Ireland, and García Márquez's underdeveloped Colombia, while the former rules over the "highly homogeneous national cultures of France and England, at the core of the world-system." Moretti draws from Immanuel Wallerstein's

description in *The Modern World-System* (1974) of a post-sixteenth-century economy dominated by European mercantilist states, divided into core and peripheral zones, and subject to relocating centers as capitalism entrenches its global hold (Amsterdam, Paris, London, New York, Tokyo). Given cartographic depth in the subsequent *Atlas of the European Novel* (1998), Moretti's world-systems-theory-inspired model of literary flow, uptake, and repurposing appears again in "Conjectures on World Literature" (2000a). That gauntlet of an essay, the first of several published in *New Left Review* and collected in *Distant Reading* (2013), challenged comparative literature with its sociological approach to literary theory. Diagnosing a "*law of literary evolution*" that governs how peripheral cultures adopt the novel as a "compromise" between Anglo-French influence and local materials, "Conjectures" returned to the evolutionary preoccupations of late-nineteenth-century literary criticism armed with 1970s-era Marxist world-systems theory, and the emerging possibility of the digital mapping of literary form. Google Books search engines and algorithmic analysis made it possible to track circulation histories, intertextual resonances, and intratextual lexical repetitions (place names, key words, phrasings, tenses) (see Moretti 1998: 200; 2003). Stanford University's Literary Lab, created by Moretti in 2010, would become a center for this merging of quantitative data and literary history.

"Conjectures on World Literature" is perhaps most known and most notorious for the espousal of *distant reading*. In Moretti's words, "you define a unit of analysis (like here, the formal compromise), and then follow its metamorphoses in a variety of environments – until, ideally, *all* of literary history becomes a long chain of related experiments" (2000a: 53–54). Not unlike Auerbach's *ansatzpunkt*, Moretti's unit of analysis allows for a pointillist method that expands from one to all, link to chain. This of course was the problem many saw; an overweening *largeness* to the effort made doubly ominous by sharply new technologies for the datafication of literature and the looming reach of nineteenth-century models of literary evolution. Moretti, in fact, cites evolutionary theory as "unquestionably the most important single influence on my work," from the essay "On Literary Evolution" (1988) through *Modern Epic* and on to "The Slaughterhouse of Literature" (2000b), with its investigation into the works that made it and the many more that didn't, the dead ends and unfittest, and, above all, the various "devices" for surveying this vast field: markets, cycles, trees, branches, and, finally, "form . . . *the repeatable element of literature*" (2000b: 63, 87). The subsequent book that followed, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract*

Models for Literary History (2005b), added the titular categories to the list of devices that make literary form a trackable historical category.

"World-Systems Analysis, Evolutionary Theory, *Weltliteratur*" (2005a) circles back to the structuring tension in world literature theory – let's call it evolution's errant lines and world-system theory's core and peripheral circles – and unearths something like a radius for distant reading. Moretti notes that to be able, as evolutionary theory does, to look at a "*multiplicity of forms*" and to explain them as a result of "*divergence and branching*" within a "process of *spatial separation*" is "not a bad starting point" (2005a: 221). So too does he regard world-systems theory's diagnosis of a world that is "*one*, and *unequal*," united and stratified by capitalism (Moretti 2005b: 127). The latter allowed for reading how "assymmetric diffusion" of literary forms from the core out "imposed a stunning *sameness* on the literary system; wave after wave," sequences of dominant genres and styles. So, in Moretti's retrospective of his own thought, evolution yielded a theory of diversification, world-systems theory one of sameness, the two yoked together by perhaps the most useful observation of all, given its turn from empirical capture of data to a dialectical modeling of method. "They are both true; but they *cannot* both be true. Or perhaps, better, they cannot be true – *unless literature itself functions in two completely incompatible ways*" (128). And so it is that Moretti finds a way to explain how the novel spreads out from core to periphery (sameness), even as the periphery layers on styles, languages, and idioms that overdetermine the classic core plot (divergence). "Plot travels well . . . style disappears, or changes." What is most significant here is the crafting of a method that allows for double vision, a grasping of distinct kinds of literary movement, distinct anatomies of particular aspects of literary form, and ultimately, with debts to Darwin, the notion of "*form as a struggle*" (134). The essay's final move is historicist. As useful as evolutionary accounts of divergence may be to describe "the 'first' *Weltliteratur*," the pre-eighteenth-century assemblage of local cultures, to depict "the 'second' *Weltliteratur*," product of the international market era, world-systems analysis is necessary (134).

This periodization, while elegant (like Moretti's entire *oeuvre*) in its ability to slice through complexity, discounts the incipiently flattening and too cleanly dividing gestures of periodization itself. Eric Hayot's *On Literary Worlds* (2013) unearths the national borders that structure much conventional periodization and instead invites "telescopic models that lead from the small to the large, rather than the reverse" – an antidote to distant reading through temporal unsettling (2013: 164). I have argued for a style of periodization cast as the apparitional return of past into present and both into a future always

yet to come – what I call here world literature in the mode of 1989 and what I have elsewhere described as the discipline's hauntology, after Derrida's neologism in *Specters of Marx*. Other critics have also sought alternative temporalities for reading. Apter's *Against World Literature*, for example, exposed world literature's Eurochronology. This is the familiar differentialist clock that allowed Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* to imagine "the Greenwich meridian of literature . . . an absolute point of reference unconditionally recognized by all contestants . . . at once a point in space, the center of all centers (which even literary rivals, by the very fact of their competition, are agreed in acknowledging), and a basis for measuring the time that is peculiar to literature" (1999: 87–88). Such geopolitical mappings unfold as centers and peripheries, firsts and laters, and reinscribe a world in which the sun doesn't set on empire, or at least not on its peculiar clock. Cheah's *What Is the World?* similarly takes up "the hierarchical ordering and control of the world according to technologies of temporal calculation" and diagnoses the intercalations of temporal and spatial mapping as what enable the conceptualization of "the *being* of the world," both in capitalist globalization form and in those postcolonial forms that resist it (2016: 1). For Cheah, it is *time* that makes world, not only the world of literature which "performatively brings humanity into being" (44), but also the revolutionary time which brings about change and enacts community. In a salutary distinction, Cheah separates the following: "the globe as a spatio-geographical entity, the alienated world created by the restrictive teleological time of the capitalist mode of production, and a world with genuine universality created by the teleological time of socialist revolution" (75).

In another vein, world literature's theorists and critics have sought to supplement the category of globe, with its capitalized flows, with a turn to planetarity. The term appears in Spivak's claim that "the planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system" (2003: 73; see also Spivak 2011). The term exerts a strong gravitational pull over Wai-Chee Dimock's opening essay for the 2001 *PMLA* special issue *Globalizing Literary Studies*, titled "Literature for the Planet," and her subsequent volume with Laurence Buell, *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature* (2007). A flicker of planetary modeling also animates David Damrosch's image of world literature texts as those subject to "elliptical" revolutions around the "twin foci" of source culture and host culture, "home tradition" and "radical otherness" (2003: 12). Dimock's "Literature for the Planet" proposes a method of "resonant reading," drawn from Einstein's theory of space-time, in which literature occupies "dimensions of space and time so far-flung and so deeply

recessional that they can never be made to coincide with the synchronic plane of the geopolitical map." Resonant reading brings authors who are geographically, linguistically, and historically distinct into an Einsteinian "relativity of simultaneity" in which non-synchronous entities collide in an endlessly warped "continuum" of linguistic contacts and an "evolving radius of literary action" (Dimock 2001: 174–75). Auerbach's *ansatzpunkt* is back again but understood as a multiplying and dispersing process of "extension, elaboration, and randomization," the work of a "global process" of reading that "turns literature into the collective life of the planet" (178).

In its most recent articulations, planetarity embraces not only the world-scale and universe-scale thinking of space-time exploded by Dimock, but also an embrace of earthly bioconnectivity and co-speciesism. In *The Planetary Turn: Relationality and Geoaesthetics in the Twenty-First Century*, Amy Elias and Christian Moraru define "planetary life" as "an incessantly thickening, historically unprecedented web of relations among people, cultures, and locales" that demands that we grasp relationality (2015: xi). This formulation recalls earlier discourses of globalization and, before that, cosmopolitanism. But there is more flesh than flow in planetarity, if we take flesh as a figure for the thinking of life, embodiment, embodied practices of art and culture, and ecological ethics. The "return to ethics" and the "relationality model" are "the planetary field's most significant counter to the global – understood primarily as a financially, economically, and technologically homogenizing force" (xviii).

With this brief account of the critical practice of world literature, I want to underscore the temporal volatility of the field, the way it simultaneously creates new approaches that themselves surface a distant past. In this spectral mode, pace Moretti, world literature is not "the only path for us" for it is itself a multiplicity of paths. The critical question for the field's practitioners is how the path changes, what branches and forks it takes, how it wends forward and back, and what categories and methods emerge along the way. There has been much discussion of the maps, charts, and flows that, too often, seem to define world literature and its protocols of reading. But the latter are also precisely a return to the question of how literature relates to world, including the spheres of ethics and politics. In a signal contribution, Ganguly's *This Thing Called the World* explores "the articulation of the problematics of being human with that of making or working in the world in our hyperconnected global era," with a focus on how the "new world novel . . . envisions the post-1989 world of violence" (2016: 24). Through the work of close reading, Ganguly considers the ways

in which distant suffering is mediatized and mediated in contemporary global fiction. This age is also another, she argues, referring us back to the eighteenth-century rise of the novel, with its horizons of violence (slavery, empire) and its own exploding information culture of print capitalism. Such spectral shadowing is here a methodological approach to what I have been at pains to show is the discursive field formation of the thing called world literature. In this sense, perhaps world literature's ontology and epistemology can coincide. Perhaps each, in a spectral figure of speech, might "talk to it," talk to the other. Ganguly intuits how much *more* world literature can be if, in her words, "we conceived of the *world* not as a literary system analogous to an ever-expanding global market but as a critical resource to understand some value-laden ascriptions attached to specific genres – such as the novel, for instance – in our avowedly global era" (80).

If genres, as Moretti showed, are analogizable to commodities, with their shifting centers of production, varying intensities of circulation, and rising and falling vogues, they are also, as Derrida notes in "The Law of Genre," always escaping their own law. Genres contaminate themselves, restaging and displacing their origins such that each new instance not only preserves a previous set of generic codes and formulas but supplements them, effectively making and breaking, doing by undoing. Genre's time is, thus, not evolutionary-teleological nor even recombinant-branching-nonlinear but, in a term that has guided this chapter, spectral. Genre's time, like revolution's, is one of remainders and reminders, a coming back from the past for the future, as Derrida says of the ghost. As spectral genres, world literature's objects invite a contact beyond a mappable landscape of global flows and local uptakes, a contact with something that remains veiled (or visored). Genres may well swim in world-systems theory waters but they are also subject, in their rippling spread, to flows forward and back, accumulations and emptying out, the silting and burying of the historical events and political unconscious that Jameson finds sedimented into form. Because of these internal movements – eddies and currents of time, expansions and contractions of space – genre gives world literature a category with which to think history differently, both as a sweep of time and as a constellation of points. The former lends itself to narratives of rises and falls and historical eras defined by them (i.e., the novel and national-imperial capitalist modernity), while the latter can sometimes detonate, in a nodal instant, a sense of the density of the process by which form sediments history, capturing or dialectically resolving the contradictions of a lived moment in time. World literature needs both the

age and the instant, the continuum and the point, the reading from outside the visor and from the ghostly space within it.

World literature can offer renewed accounts of genre, of historical periodization, of spatiotemporal folding, of the variegated practices of reading, of the ongoing investigation of what it means to be humans in, and of, the world, and finally, of the "global" itself. Was the post-1989 imprint of the global on literary studies generally and world literature particularly largely an epiphenomenon of globalization mania? And was the method of "globalizing" little more than the exportation from some starting point of a set of universal methodologies, literary equivalents of the golden arches that the 1990s loved to hate? Yet is there not still some reason not to throw the global baby out with globalization's bathwater? We can't Brexit categories, withdrawing them from the contexts that gave rise to them simply so as to say no to them. I'm not saying world literature is equivalent to globalization – it most certainly is not. But I am still interested, after all this time, in what the term global *did* and *didn't do* for world literature in its most recent phase. To excavate the various resonances of this terminology during the 1990s and 2000s is to consider how disciplinary history can teach, renew, and reimagine disciplinary method. At the very least, the turn to the global surfaced a number of categories and modes of reading that remain world literature's livest wire, ready to spark the next new thing. Speak to it.

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PART II

⋆

THINKING THE WORLD

9

Does Poetry Make Worlds?

ERIC HAYOT

What does not make a world? Not, what *isn't* a world, but what does not *create* a world, imagine a world into existence? What does not create itself as a whole, a sum, a collection, a totality, a grouping, a set of things with a coherence that belongs particularly to it, and emerges from it, or almost from it, as though it were the self-creating conscience of its own being?

You are reading *The Cambridge History of World Literature*, which has the word *world* right in the title, so these questions seem like things you should be interested in.

> – But do I really need to be interested? The *world* in "world literature," after all, functions as an adjective, like "German" or "Russian" or "nineteenth century"; it defines a particular *kind* of literature. This book is about literature, not worlds; what a world is or isn't doesn't really need to come into it. All I need to know at this point is what kind of literature world literature is, and what its history is, and then we can be done.

This is not, I reply to you, a crazy thing to say. "World literature" can mean several different things, depending on who you ask. But scholars interested in world literature mainly use it in one of three overlapping ways: (1) to refer to a way of thinking about literary history that is not constrained by time period or geographical boundaries (so that "world literature" means thinking about a work within the context of all the literature ever produced in the world, from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to Instagram poets); (2) to refer to ways that some works of literature are affected by their circulation across space and time, or by their assumption that they will circulate across space and time in a certain way, in conversation with literature from all sorts of places; (3) or to refer, somewhat sloppily, to literature written outside of Europe and the United States (this is often what you will find if you look up syllabi for "World

Literature" on the Internet). In none of these cases does a complex theory of worlds or worldedness really need to get involved.

In the first two cases, "world" is being used mainly for its contrastive value, and the thing that it contrasts is the more historically common way of thinking about literature in terms of some geographic or national or linguistic or temporal constraint. World literature thus pits itself against American literature or French literature or literature of the Spanish Golden Age, and even against Kenyan literature or Tibetan literature or any other kind of delimitation you'd like.[1]

In this way "world" functions in the phrase "world literature" as a marker of a certain kind of extension, or even totality, in a couple of different ways. If we think of "world literature" as "all the literature of the world" (use #1 above), then we see that "world" marks a limit on literature that is coextensive with the entire planet and indeed with all literature produced on it; in this way "world literature" and "literature" are almost synonyms. (Imagine someone saying, "I study literature." "What kind of literature?" "All the kinds of literature.") Or, alternatively, if we think of "world literature" as "literature that is oriented toward the whole world," then "world" marks a limit on the address of literature, on its audience and its field of responsiveness and responsibility, that extends also to the whole planet and to all of literature, present and past. World literature in this second sense is literature that belongs to a world that is aware of itself as a world. For this definition of world literature, then, world literature emerges only at the point when literature (and indeed culture and societies more broadly) can orient themselves to that extension, meaning sometime around the mid-1800s, which is why one of the first and most famous uses of the phrase "world literature" was Goethe's, who used it in exactly this way.

The extension of literature to the world can be, like everything else, historicized. In the first case, where "world literature" refers mainly to a scholarly approach to thinking about literature, we can see that that "world" lived in and conceived by and addressed by Goethe in the 1830s will be quite different from that lived in and conceived by the scholars of the present day. This goes for the second case as well. The world toward which

1 What about the third case? Here it's contrastive as well, but "world" is functioning as a variation on "third world," just as it does in the phrase "world music." This means that "world" in the third instance functions almost exactly like "German" or "Russian," in that it defines a constrained (though admittedly complex) geographic region of origin; it is therefore not conceptually much different from those concepts. It is also worth saying that the logic behind this use of *world* strikes me as basically racist.

a piece of literature written in late-nineteenth-century Iran orients itself will be quite different from that addressed by a Paulo Coehlo novel sold today in airport kiosks in translations into any number of modern languages.

Now you begin to see, I hope, how ideas of the world matter to the idea of world literature. If the "world" addressed by either scholars of world literature or by the literature itself changes over time, then we ought to do some work to understand what kind of world-concepts have existed in the past, and what kind of world-concepts exist in the present, so that we can be smart about using the concept at all. We can see that world-concepts will change both by virtue of a relation to what one might think of as "facts" about the world (changing national boundaries and names, changing patterns of immigration or trade, changing technologies of communication) and in *formal terms*: in subtle changes in the very sense of the world as a *world*, in the way in which the world is felt to be organized, connected, structured, and the like. How is the world organized into categories or regions? What kind of movement is possible across those regions? How busy or full are they? How do these regions interact with individuals? What kinds of changes are possible in the relation between the individual and the world? To what extent is the world experienced as a kind of horizon, toward which one might travel but never arrive, and to what extent is it imagined, instead, as a kind of prison or a limit?

Answering these questions would allow us to see that the difference between the "world" of a seventeenth-century French peasant and a seventeenth-century Chinese one was not just a matter of language, religion, political culture, and so on, but also a matter of an entire sociocultural shape of their lived experience, a shape or feel that is itself the product of the various technological and social facts that surround them but is not identical with it. What I'm calling shape or feel is what I mean when I refer to the formal aspects of worldedness.

To describe and historicize those aspects, of course, requires evidence, and in particular evidence from the cultural record that describes how people lived and thought. And one of the major pieces of evidence we have for such descriptions is literature. Literature makes good evidence for the history of world-ideas (which then in turn tell us about the "world" imagined in "world literature") not only because it so often represents the world – because it shows us things like people talking or doing things or falling in love or murdering each other or having dinner or getting messages or whatever – but because it represents all that activity inside a world-shape or a world-idea. Think about the fairy tales in which an Aladdin becomes a prince, or

a Cinderella a princess (also the plot, by the way, of *Pretty in Pink* or *Pretty Woman*). All such stories are about social class, and about the boundaries that social class imposes on our lives; about the way that the shape of the social world organizes us. And they are about the violation or breaking through of those boundaries, about the idea that such boundaries cannot stand in the face of extraordinary beauty (Cinderella) or daring (Aladdin) or genuineness (Andie Walsh, as played by Molly Ringwald). What kinds of forces (like social class) constitute boundaries in a literary world? What forces (like beauty) can breach those boundaries, and when, and how? How do such boundaries compare to other boundaries established in the world, boundaries that a given story does not address or cross? With these questions we get some way into seeing, and thinking about, what a world-idea looks like in literature, and therefore also closer to a historicization of the idea of the world as a formal structure.

In 2012 I published a book that laid out a series of questions that would help readers describe and compare world-ideas (Hayot 2012). Because the ideas were new, the book applied them mainly to examples that felt "easy," in the sense that they were works of literature that pretty clearly had worlds – that generated what the film scholar Christian Metz has called a "diegesis," an imaginary world-space shaped more or less like our world.[2] So I looked at novels, at films, and at video games, and mainly at examples of those kinds of things that had obvious stories, that organized space and time and social life in such a way as to be fairly recognizable commentaries on, and representations of, formal world structures of the type we already understand from living in the actual world. And I suggested, in the book, that the history of such world structures could tell us a lot about the kinds of worlds people lived in, and the kinds of worlds they thought they lived in, or wished they lived in, or dreamed of as future versions of the worlds they lived in. All good.

At the same time, I knew that the history of creative human making included entire realms that did not, or did not easily, represent worlds to us. Do the visual arts represent worlds? Easy enough to say that a painting like Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1642) shows us a diegesis – we can clearly, after all, imagine a before and after to the moment it represents, and indeed an entire life-world for the men in the picture. But harder, I think, to do so for the watercolor portraits of insects painted by the

2 Metz 1990. That this is a matter of shape rather than of facts is made clear by the fact that a movie like *The Smurfs* has a diegesis, as do any number of science fiction films; we might say that they have a realistic world-shape even if their content is not actually realistic but fantastical.

Chinese artist Qi Baishi (1865–1957) which show us bugs in close-up, with absolutely nothing diegetic behind or around them. And even harder for a purely abstract painting like Yves Klein's *Blue Monochrome* (1961), which is just a rectangle of particularly arresting cobalt blue. And what about dance? Sure, when it tells a story (like in ballet) it can, but just as often (as in modern dance, or folk dancing), there is no clear represented world in front of us, no diegesis in the Metzian sense.

We might nonetheless observe that both dances and paintings, even when they do not produce a diegesis, nonetheless represent *structures* of some kind. The organization of a square dance, with its rules and its movements and its responses and its partnering, suggests something quite different, structurally and formally speaking, from the organizational rules of chorus line, and different again from the gyrations and freedom of modern dance. And likewise for art; though we may be hard-pressed to develop a sense of the structural organization of one Piet Mondrian painting, a collection of fifteen or twenty of them will begin to reveal some laws of structure, some laws of form, which might amount to a formal world-picture, even in the absence of a diegesis.

In this way, by looking at places that do not seem to shows us worlds in the ordinary representational sense, we begin to get a feel for the history of structure in art. The question before us is whether these structures or organizations amount to something that merits being called worldedness, and therefore whether they have anything to teach us about the history of world-ideas. If the answer is yes, then we need to figure out how; if the answer is no, that's fine too, and would teach us something pretty interesting about the limitations of world-thinking more generally.

The Test Case

Our test case is lyric poetry. Why lyric? Because the recent history of literary criticism includes a useful debate about poetic worldedness with which to begin. And also because lyric features a number of interesting subgenres defined by more or less formal characteristics, which seem to constitute good grounds for an investigation of the relation between structure and worldedness.

First the debate. For reasons that do not matter to us here, in the twentieth century it became increasingly common for critics of lyric poetry to imagine the lyric as a kind of dramatic monologue, an expression of a fictional situation in which the poetic address of the lyric was effectively spoken by

a fictional speaker inside a fictional diegesis. In some respects, this makes certain poems, ones that clearly function as dramatic monologues – think of Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" – into models for all lyric poetry. One would therefore imagine the speaker of William Carlos Williams's poem about the plums as an ironically regretful middle-aged, middle-class househusband, and the speaker in Elizabeth Bishop's "Over 2,000 Illustrations and a Complete Concordance" as an American tourist of the Middle East, in each case asserting that the poems functioned as representations of a fictional situation, and treating the speaker as a fictional persona. Jonathan Culler describes the consequences: "if the speaker is a persona, then interpretation of the poem becomes a matter of reconstructing the characteristics of this persona, especially the motives and circumstances of this act of speech – as if the speaker were a character in a novel" (Culler 2016: 109). Or as if the speaker were delivering a soliloquy onstage, and our job were to reconstruct the play in which the soliloquy was taking place.

If all lyrics are fictions, that makes lyrics relatively uninteresting for our purposes. Like epic poems – like the *Odyssey*, or the *Mahabharata* – they would clearly produce diegeses, and they would be subject to the same analysis as novels, drama, films, and the like. Culler goes on to suggest, however, that such a theory of lyric fails "to capture much of what is distinctive and historically important in the lyric tradition" (116). He emphasizes against this novelization of the lyric, the elements of lyric that he calls *epideictic*, that praise or blame something in the world, as well as those elements of lyric that bear some resemblance to *ritual* (repetition of sound and rhythm, the present-tenseness of lyric address, and the performative demand made by lyric on the world). Arguing that these elements define the fundamental historical practice of lyric, Culler suggests that the primary site of enunciation for lyric poems is in fact this world, our world, and that our world, this very world, is also the very site toward which most lyric energy directs itself.

If Culler is right, then lyric poems do not produce diegeses, fictional worlds, because they locate themselves fundamentally *in our world* and orient themselves toward the actually existing world rather than some imaginary one, even when they include fictional elements. Lyric conceived this way differs importantly from both epic and history writing. In the latter, the work of art claims to represent to us our actually existing world at some previous point in time; the work thus aligns the represented world with the actual world, but at a historical remove. Lyric imagined the way Culler does it, by contrast, calls out to the immediate present of its reading; both its ritual and

its enunciative effects operate in the actual moment of its performance, whether it is read silently or aloud. The lyric world-concept does not so much, therefore, represent a world as generate a world in real time as a function of the relation between the poetic text and the moment of its enunciation. Lyric is a demand made on the present that the latter activate the world stored/generated by the poem, and that it recognize this stored world as coincident in important ways with the world in which the poem is being read. The lyric diegesis is thus a function of the relation between the stored state of the poem (on paper or in memory) and its activation via performance or reading in the real.

This emphasis on the present tense of enunciation and the call to actuality gives us our first line of investigation for the lyric's relation to worldedness. A second line comes from the fact that lyric, far more than the novel, includes a number of genres defined not by their content but by their form. Consider the sonnet or the haiku. Though both forms potentially imply a certain kind of content – love in the first case, nature in the second – they both have grown extensively away from this initial demand, so that we can find sonnets about soccer or haiku about war. What's more, both forms are fundamentally defined by formal characteristics; not all love poems are sonnets, but almost all fourteen-line poems are sonnets, just as almost all very short three-line poems are haikus. (And even if someone writes a fourteen-line poem and insists that it is not a sonnet, you would be quite justified in saying that at this point any fourteen-line poem by definition puts itself in a strong relation to the sonnet tradition, and so even if it isn't exactly a sonnet it is certainly calling out to the sonnet as an interpretive and organizational category.) These formal characteristics are part of what makes lyrics memorable, and part of what shapes their interpretation. Though such characteristics do not specifically represent the world – there is nothing "fourteen-line-ish" about the diegetic world of a given sonnet, or "alternating lines of three and four beats-ish" about the world of a ballad – these formal structures nonetheless speak to world by speaking to, and enacting, the history of pattern and structure. In so doing they belong to a broader history of form, a history in which humans see forms in the world around them – either forms they have made, like social forms or family forms, or forms that seem to come from a nonhuman outside, like the form that governs the living and dying of things – and also make forms that comment on or respond to those forms in a variety of ways. Poetic form is thus part of a much larger tradition of thinking about the relationship between parts and wholes, or arts and wholes, that is part of how we think about what worlds are and what they do.

Test Case: The Chinese *Fu*

In what follows I look at one specific poetic genre, the classical Chinese *fu*. Unlike the sonnet or the haiku, the *fu* is not characterized by a fixed number of lines. Rather, and in this way very much like the European genre of the *blazon*, *fu* are formally characterized by their relation to a kind of work language does, namely, description. That description is historically a lyric mode can be gathered both from the existence of the *fu* (which dates back to the Han dynasty, second century BCE) and from the appearance, in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (fourth century BCE), of a description of the epideictic function of language, for which, as he writes (in George Kennedy's translation), "the present [tense] is the most important; for all speakers praise or blame in regard to existing qualities" (Aristotle 2006: 48). For Aristotle epideixis, literally the pointing to things, their showing-forth, is a kind of language focused on display, demonstration; it is opposed to language focused on politics or the law, which tries to cause some decision to be made. Whether or not we agree with this understanding of epideixis (or whether we, like Jeffrey Walker, think that Aristotle is producing a much too restrictive understanding of the historical function of epideictic language), for now I want to highlight two things about his sentence: that Aristotle says that epideixis is focused on the *present* (even if it will occasionally refer to the past or future) and that it emphasizes "existing qualities," that is, that it praises or blames someone or something in relation to specific features or characteristics of it.[3] It is this language of qualities that implies the strong descriptive element of epideictic language; as with the *fu* poem, which codifies (as we will see) a strong descriptiveness as a form of praise, so Aristotle's description of the epidiectic function of language registers the degree to which, when we wish to praise or blame some *one* or some *thing*, we do so by enumerating aspects of that person or thing, what we might describe, as Aristotle does, as its "qualities." We have evidence, then, that the recognition of the relation between description and being (the aspects of the thing, and the thing) dates back in the history of poetry, both Greek and Chinese, some 2,500 years, which should give us enough confidence, going forward, to make some claims about its social importance, and justify a certain amount of attention.

Now for the *fu* 賦.[4] It is the major form of Chinese Han dynasty poetry. Its most canonical form, the *gufu*, is characterized, David Knechtges writes, by

3 For a lengthy and quite wonderful discussion of the history of the epideictic, see Walker 2000.

4 As always when I write about Chinese literature, I wish to be clear about my linguistic abilities and my research background. Though I speak (well) and read (poorly) modern

"elaborate description, hyperbole, repetition of synonyms, extensive cataloging, difficult language, a tendency toward a complete portrayal of a subject, and often a moral conclusion" (Knechtges 2008: 60). Sima Xiangru's "*Fu* on the Imperial Park," written in the second century BCE, functions as the ur-text of the genre. Running to some 500 lines, it consists of a fantastical, elaborate description of the Imperial Park of Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty. Following an introductory set of statements in prose, in which a character named Lord No-such announces his intention to describe the park, we get:

> To its left is Cangwu,
> To its right is Western Limits.
> The Cinnabar River traverses its south,
> The Purple Gulf intersects its north.
> Here begin and end the Ba and the Chan [rivers],
> Here exit and enter the Jing and Wei.
> The Feng, Hao, Lao, and Jue
> Twisting and twining, sinuously snaking
> Crisscross within it.
> Vast and wide, the eight streams separately flow,
> Back to back, each in a different manner, East, west, south, and north,
> They gallop and dash hither and thither.
> They emerge from gaps in steep hills,
> Run along the banks of holms and isles,
> Pass through the middle of cinnamon groves,
> Cross into broad and boundless wastes.
> Swiftly, amply flowing,
> They descend along the slopes,
> Enter mouths of narrow gorges,
> Collide with giant boulders,
> Smash against winding shores,
> Frothing with violent anger.
> Soaring and leaping, surging and swelling,
> Spurting and spouting, rushing and racing,
> Pressing and pushing, clashing and colliding,
> Flowing uncontrolled, bending back,
> Wheeling and rearing, beating and battering,
> Swelling and surging, troublous and turbulent,

Mandarin Chinese, I cannot read classical Chinese. I am therefore indebted in my discussion here, as always, to scholars who have done the necessary background work. In the case of the *fu*, this means David Knechtges, who is the leading Western expert in the form, and on whose work I have relied extensively for even the most basic information.

> Loftily arching, billowing like clouds,
> Sinuously snaking, curling and coiling,
> Outracing their own waves, rushing to the chasms,
> Lap, lap, they descend to the shoals.

The description of the river, all of it in lines of four characters using heavy alliteration, parallel structures, and (as you can see) hyperbolic detail, goes on for another forty-six lines. Later we get a description of the garden's plants:

> And then
> Black kumquats that ripen in the summer,
> Yellow mandarins, coolie oranges, pomelos,
> Loquats, wild jujubes, persimmons,
> Wild pears, apples, magnolias,
> Date palms, box myrtles,
> Cherries, grapes,
> Dark poplars, dwarf cherries,
> Plums and litchees
> Are spread among the rear palaces,
> Form rows in the northern orchards,
> Stretch over hills and mounds,
> Descend to the level plain.
> They wave their emerald leaves,
> Sway their purple stalks,
> Burst with red blossoms,
> Hang with vermillion blooms.
> Bright and brilliant, grand and glorious,
> They splendently sparkle in the vast fields.
> Apples, oaks,
> White birch, liquidambars, gingkos, sumacs,
> Pomegranates, coconuts,
> Betel palms, windmill palms,
> Sandalwoods, magnolias,
> Camphors, and wax trees:
> Grow a thousand yards tall.

The descriptive range of the poem extends well beyond a single garden; indeed, at one point the garden is described as being so large that it has different weather in its northern and southern regions. As Knechtges points out, the garden becomes, in its elaboration, a description of the entire Han empire, a glorification of its diversity, its range, and its power. The inclusion of everything, including a wide variety of trees, plants, and animals that

would have been obscure even to educated Han dynasty audiences, thus reflects not only the poet's lexical range and skill but also the glamor of imperial might, and, more broadly, the glamor of totality itself, the glamor of an extension or inclusiveness that, by bringing everything together in a single space, constitutes that space (and the poem itself) as a world.[5]

All this is enough in any case to give you a sense of the *fu*, of what it was and how it worked, not only in the Han dynasty but for many centuries thereafter. But what is really interesting here is that in the centuries that follow the Han dynasty, the same word *fu* used to name this genre also comes, in Chinese theorizations of the functions of poetic language, to name the language's ability to describe things. So the word that means "poetic genre that engages in extensive, hyberbolic description" also means, in Chinese poetics, "language's capacity to describe." In this second sense *fu* is contrasted with two other terms, *bi* and *xing*, which refer to explicitly figural tendencies of language. *Bi* is essentially metaphor, and *xing*, which is more complicated and controversial, refers to the tendency of feeling and emotion to emerge from extensive metaphor-like activity.[6] While much ink is spilled in the history of Chinese poetics to this day on the precise meanings of *bi* and *xing*, *fu* has received comparatively little attention, because, in relation to the other two, it is considered to be less complicated, less unclear, less mysterious. It is, in this context, the name for what language does when it is *not making figuration happen*, when it is "simply" describing stuff and therefore not doing any of the magic work that language does when it is not plain or unornamented.

This idea of *fu* as unornamented, descriptive style (in contrast to both *bi* and *xing*, which describe secondary, denotative meaning) sits in an odd relation to the extravagance of the *fu* genre, which turns description into ornamentation, thanks to its extensive eye and penchant for synonyms. In fact it seems quite contradictory: in the case of the genre *fu*, we have description that is clearly, by virtue of its hyperbolic excessiveness, figurative in a strong sense, and in the case of the poetic term *fu*, we have description

5 One of the key markers of epideixis in the "*Fu* on the Imperial Park" is the use of the phrase "And then" 於是. It appears both at the beginning of poetic sequences (like the one about the trees, above) and in prose lines, where it introduces the next framework for action: "And then in the midst of drinking, during the rapture of music, the Son of Heaven becomes disconsolate, as if he had lost something." Its repetition marks the poem's acknowledgment of its own extension, a kind of "but wait, there's more!" attitude appropriate to a television ad campaign, another example of the way in which figureless description, extended, becomes a kind of figuration.

6 On *fu*, *bi*, and *xing* as categories of Chinese poetics, see Yu 1987; Gu 1997: 1–22.

that defines the state of language that does not need much explanation, that is essentially literal or plain. One should not conclude from this apparent contradiction, however, that the field of Chinese poetics is caught in some dumb paradox. Rather, the point is that from very early on, and for centuries thereafter, Chinese poetics formally recognized the entwining of (plain) description and (ornamental) display, and put the tensions inherent in that entwining to good literary and literary critical use.[7]

The *fu*'s capacity to create a world and to organize it has therefore to do not only with the fact of its descriptions (which would simply be a kind of mimesis, a representation of things), but with the intensity of those descriptions, their scope and range. This intensity is both adjectival (think of all the different ways that the eight rivers move, soaring and leaping and spurting and so on), and nominal, bringing together a multiplicity of things that amount, somehow, to everything.

This strategy differs importantly from one that would simply say, "the imperial garden has *all the animals* in it," or "the imperial garden *has one of every kind of plant*." Even though, technically, these sentences would be more inclusive than the *fu*'s lists, they would feel less full, less extensive, less elaborate, less impressive, less – in a term Knechtges uses to describe the *fu*, borrowing explicitly from the Greek tradition – *epideictic* (Knechtges 2008: 78). If we want to mine the *fu* for world-theories, then, we might begin by saying that the *fu* suggests that a sense of completeness or totality can come most strongly not from the assertion of that totality (the garden has everything in it) but from extensive descriptions of the aspects of that totality, what Aristotle might have called the "qualities" of it or the "states of things" in it. That such descriptions are necessarily incomplete – that the thing itself, the whole totality, is not equal to the listing of its parts, that we could extend the "*Fu* on the Imperial Gardens" by another 500 or even 10,000 lines by describing more and more things in the garden (Sima Xiangru never says anything about insects, for example) – does not somehow make the extensive descriptiveness of the *fu* less convincing. Rather the *fu* manages through epideictic overflow to produce a list that acquires, through the force of its figurative action, the feeling that *nothing could be added to it*. In this way an enumeration of qualities crosses over to become coeval with the totality itself.[8]

7 In this the Chinese are not unique. That same tension appears in the history of Greek literary thought, gathered in the complex history of uses of epideixis, as Walker has shown.

8 If what we call "figuration" is really just another name for the magic that language does, then it seems clear that *fu* or epideixis achieves figuration at precisely the moment when

In short, and to conclude: the *fu* formalizes a world-concept, non-diegetically. And therefore poetry, even non-diegetic or purely formal poetry like concrete poems or even sound poems, can also formalize world-concepts. Let us note that the *fu*'s world-concept is both particular and generalizable. Particular, because it is quite different from the world-concept formalized by a novel, whose claim to totality rests on quite different grounds than that of mere extensive description.[9] And generalizable, insofar as it rests on what seem to be very broadly held (at least as broadly as both the Chinese and the Greek traditions) conceptualizations of the nature of description (as a listing of qualities) and, just as importantly, the social functions of extensive display and enumeration in the establishment or maintenance of powerful social forms (like empires).[10]

If this is so – if literary worlds are made by form, as well as by content – then a history of world-concepts would need to theorize, at a minimum, the various codified versions of those forms in order to fully understand the history of human societies' attempts to imagine and represent the shape of totality, one of whose names and formal encodings is, of course, "the world." What the *fu* suggests is that the philosophical line between enumeration and totality, between the list and completeness, can be crossed with a certain amount of social and linguistic effort. And not only that the line can be crossed but, as the as the long history of *fu* suggests, that something in the social *wants* it to be crossed, and crosses it, over and over. Of course any such repetitive act can be read as a form of existential anxiety, the scratching of an unhealed and unhealable wound. But one might just as well read it as an expression of power, of pleasure, and thus of an assertion that epideixis, praise of qualities, can and does make worlds, and that our world might be so made, so understood, if we could describe it well enough.

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a listing of qualities comes to be coextensive with the thing that is nonetheless not coextensive with its qualities list.

9 *Pace* Lukács on Zola; see Georg Lukács 1971: 110–48.

10 That there are specific political and historical reasons for the rapid rise to prominence of the *fu* in the Han dynasty is probably also true. See Hellmut Wilhelm 1967: 310–19.

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10

Ecosystems of World Literature

ALEXANDER BEECROFT

What is the appropriate scale on which to study world literature? Debates in recent years have recognized that neither the nation nor the world itself constitute useful units of analysis and have sought to cast various sorts of intermediate areas as more appropriate objects of study (Bush 2017). The need for such reimagining is clear: a world literature built out of national literatures would be an unwieldy monster, a whole of too many parts to allow for any sort of useful generalization. Moreover, to treat world literature simply as the sum of the world's national literatures merely amplifies the problems of focus and emphasis endemic to national literatures: overreliance on major authors of the national canon, on works in the standardized form of the national language, and on works that embody the received narrative of national literary history without anachronism or belatedness. In fact, it is very often the works traditionally *least* interesting in national literary traditions that have the greatest impact in the realm of world literature: works by migrant, exilic, or diasporic authors; works in minority languages or dialects, in immigrant or cosmopolitan languages; works whose form or tone feels either like a throwback to much earlier literary values elsewhere, or like an untimely anticipation of another culture's future. Conversely, some of the works highly prized in national canons or what Lars Boje Mortensen describes as a "broad canon" – that is, works appearing regularly in national curricula and highly generative of scholarly analysis in their national home – find themselves adrift in a world literature that is no longer structured by the national historical narrative that gave them place (Mortensen 2018). Either too focused on national conditions to generate a lively readership abroad, or else too easily replaced by their local equivalents elsewhere (who reads, for example, the second-tier Romantic poets of another linguistic tradition? Or even, most of the time, the first-tier Romantic poets?), such works are prominent in national literary histories, but a narrow focus on them may obscure the global patterns and flows that are of special interest to scholars of world literature.

It is equally true, however, that the world is not enough, conceptually speaking, for world literature. We do not (yet) have anything like a canon of world literature, and we lack even the means of constructing one. Not only do we face the "great unread," but, even more daunting, the great untranslated: the vast volume of literature, especially in non-European languages, which remains unavailable to non-specialists outside the homeland of the text (Cohen 2002: 23). Much of the relevant material, indeed, lies in what Mortensen calls the "closed archive": texts that are unpublished, uncatalogued, or even crumbling on a library or archive shelf. Even if available scholarship and translations have given us a better sense of the breadth of world literature, no field that emerged in the wake of postcolonial theory, critical race theory, feminist and queer theory, or the other intellectual discourses of the late twentieth century could rest entirely comfortably with the notion of any sort of canon, no matter how broadly conceived. If we operate with a definition of "world literature" that includes only those works currently in global circulation, then our canon will be broad indeed. Yet even this world literature would still be a theoretical concept that merely seeks to describe the world as it is, rather than to change it for the better. For this reason, I prefer the daunting, even impossible, "unhyphenated" understanding of world literature that includes, at least potentially, the entire literary production of the world as the archive on which the field will draw, rather than merely those texts which already circulate globally (Beecroft 2008).

But if we don't have a world canon, it is also clear we don't even have a world archive, at least not one with a uniform catalogue or classification system. Not only are different literatures in very different states of preservation and of scholarly access (let alone of scholarly access to those not literate in their languages), but those literatures differ widely in how they define genres, establish norms of taste, and indeed police the boundaries of the "literary." In a world in which Plato is generally thought to be a "literary" author, but Locke may not be, how do we classify Confucius, who did not qualify as "literary" under classical Chinese bibliographic systems but who was known by heart by centuries of East Asian literati, and whose work is, in a world literature context, frequently placed alongside Plato's (Shunqing and Wei 2018)?

The "area" – that vaguely defined and non-exclusive category somewhere between the nation and the world – does seem to offer a useful starting point for thinking through these problems. The number of languages required to study a literary "area" (be it Latin America, South Asia, the Islamic world, the

Indian Ocean, the Black Atlantic, or any of a number of other possibilities), while still often unmanageable for a single person, at least begins to approach the dimensions of something that an academic department or program might cover. The archives, while vast and scattered, are slightly more manageable, and to the extent that literary texts circulate broadly within a particular area, we have reason to hope that reasonably similar definitions of literature might circulate as well, making it possible to find the apples we need for comparative purposes.

If, as Chris Bush and others have suggested, we are to pursue the "area" as a unit of geographic analysis in world literature, we have no shortage of options to choose from. We can think in terms of continents, as is often the practice already: "Literature of the Americas," "European Literature," and "African Literature" are already quite familiar constructs in comparative and world literature. "Asian Literature" has understandably been less common as an object of study, given that the continent possesses more than three-fifths of the human population and includes a number of well-attested and ancient literary traditions. But here we can fall back on the familiar "areas" of area studies: South, East, Southeast, and Central Asia. The remaining space in Eurafrasia – that is to say, the Near or Middle East/Arab world/Islamic world – points perhaps to the ontological challenges these "areas" present (challenges shared by the continents as well) (Beecroft 2016). Are they primarily linguistic, geographic, religious, "civilizational," based on trade, politics, or the circulation of literary texts? None of these properties uniquely identifies any of these "areas" (Toynbee 1935). The major literary languages of the Americas are European in origin and are now shared by the literatures of Africa, South Asia, and other regions. Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism cross many areas; the boundaries of the continents are often geographic fictions, and the division of the world into Toynbee's "civilizations" creates as many problems as it solves (Lewis and Wigen 1997). The fact that Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" featured a very similar set of regions (Western, Orthodox, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, African, Latin American, Sinic, and Japanese) to those of area studies should give us pause and remind us of the Cold War epistemologies that gave birth to these areas as objects of study (Lewis and Wigen 1997). We must always remember that these areas are less meaningful realities than they are "mental isolates" that are necessary for scholarly work, and so we must never forget to look around and beyond their edges for what is concealed by the "areas" constructed by area studies (Tansley 1935).

Other, more fluid, conceptions of the "area" have been explored in recent years. Oceanic studies has provided one means of linking related areas on different continents, making visible literary phenomena that would be invisible at the national or even continental level. The proliferation of "-phones" and "-spheres" (as in "Sinophone" or "Anglophone") has likewise revealed new possibilities and clarified existing relationships (Beecroft 2018a). At the same time, however, the specific configuration of the "-phones" still tends to separate core from periphery: "Francophone" literature, despite the efforts of some, still frequently connotes literature composed outside France or by non-French citizens (Bris and Rouaud 2007). "Sinophone" literature is likewise rarely taken to include the literature composed by native speakers of Chinese writing inside the People's Republic of China, and still less often is it taken to include texts written in the classical language during the imperial era (Shih 2011). These categories, then (as all categories must), divide texts from each other as much as they bring them together, necessarily creating their own silences and omissions. Grouping together texts produced in the same language in different regions, or by writers of the same ethnicity working in different languages or regions, has the effect of separating those texts from others produced in the same region, so that reading a Chinese-language writer from Thailand as "Sinophone" may obscure their status as also "Thai."

Since any geographic classification of the literature of the world must involve some arbitrariness and must obscure some connections even as it reinforces others, it follows that our classifications should be plural, overlapping, fuzzy, non-exclusive, and provisional (Ette 2016). Only through ongoing attempts to transcend our own categories will we avoid instantiating at a new level all the familiar problems associated with the national focus traditionally given to the study of literature. It is in this spirit that I have offered my model of literary ecology as an alternative paradigm for thinking about literature on a sub-global but supranational level (Beecroft 2015).

In my book *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day*, I offer an alternative way of thinking cross-culturally about literature, a method derived in part from ecology. Ecologists characterize different parts of the world in two different ways: as ecozones and as biomes. Ecozones, or "biogeographic realms," resemble to some extent the "areas" of area studies, and they sometimes even overlap with them in territory (Olson et al. 2001). Ecozones are large contiguous regions of the planet with a shared evolutionary history and are separated by significant barriers, such as oceans, great mountain ranges, and large deserts, which have historically impeded the movement of plants and animals. These large regions

(corresponding, roughly speaking, to North America, Latin America, Africa, South/Southeast Asia, Northern Eurasia, Australia, the Pacific islands, and Antarctica) are occupied by closely related species that have adapted in some cases to a wide range of habitats.

Biomes, by contrast, are not entirely contiguous geographically, and they do not share an evolutionary history. Rather, they are the disparate regions of the world that share similar habitats based on temperature and precipitation patterns, soil types, and so on. These biomes (examples of which would be the tropical rain forest, the desert, the tundra, or the Mediterranean landscape) are found in widely separate regions of the world, and the species they contain may not be closely related. Because these species have had to respond to similar living conditions, however, they have tended to develop similar features – for example, the waxy leaves typical of Mediterranean-style plants are designed to cope with the wetter winters and drier summers of regions such as southern Europe and northern Africa, central Chile, southern California, the Cape Province of South Africa, and parts of southern and western Australia. These plants have evolved separately and for separate reasons, developing out of existing species in what became similar directions because they were seeking solutions to similar environmental challenges.

In order to approach ecology from a comparative or historical perspective, both the biome and the ecozone need to be taken into account; the distribution of species in a particular location cannot be understood through one of these dimensions alone. But when we think of literature in a comparative or historical sense, in terms of areas, continents, -spheres, and -phones, we are thinking only on the model of the ecozone: in other words, we are looking at the evolution and circulation of literary forms across defined geographic regions with literary cultures which are to some extent shared. We think much less frequently about typological comparisons across cultural distance – about how, for example, people in south India and in northwestern Europe began to compose literature in vernacular languages at around the same time (ca. AD 700–800), and in similar reaction to the presence of existing classical languages (respectively, Sanskrit/Prakrit and Latin) (Pollock 2009).[1] Similarly, there is room to compare archaic and classical Greece and Warring States-era China in terms of their similar challenges in creating a body of texts that could consolidate a notional cultural unity in the face of extreme political fragmentation (Beecroft 2010). Drawing on these basic observations and some others, I have proposed a series of six ecologies

1 For the role of Prakrit in the creation of this "literary cosmopolis," see Ollett 2017.

(biomes, in terms of the distinction above) in which literature seems to have circulated somewhere or other in human history (2008, 2015). I use the language of ecology here partly in the manner of Niklas Luhmann's notion of "environment," as that which is drawn upon by a system while remaining external to it. In my case, these are the political, economic, social, religious, and technological factors that shape the literary world without being governed by it, though I do make use of some specific concepts from ecological science, using, for example, the concepts of "genetic drift" and minimum viable populations to think through the challenges faced by less commonly spoken languages (Luhmann 2000; Beecroft 2015: 243–48).

My list of ecologies is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive: certainly, there is room to consider additional ecologies for situations that may not entirely fit into the existing six (these range from ancient Egypt to contemporary Latin America).[2] Moreover, certain distinctions I make may seem less essential than others: the absence of a cosmopolitan language in the background is the main distinction between my panchoric and vernacular contexts, for example, and the distinction between the cosmopolitan and the global may be more theoretical than actual. This fuzzy, overlapping, nonsequential, and incomplete taxonomy is not intended to reduce all literary experience to its lowest common denominator but rather to provide the beginning of a shared language in which it might be possible to speak about world literature in a cross-cultural context.

With those cautions in mind, the six ecologies I have proposed are as follows.

1. The *epichoric*, or purely local, is the limit case where texts (probably though not necessarily oral in composition) do not circulate beyond their small community of origin. This ecology, a zero-grade version of literary circulation, is included primarily as a conceptual tool rather than as a fully accurate description of any actual situation, since all known cultures interact in at least some measure with others. Small-scale tribal communities of past and present, whether in the Americas or on the fringes of larger cultural worlds in Eurafrasia, provide the closest approximation, though such communities are generally in some kind of productive cultural relation with their neighbors – and where they are not, they are generally in flight from the predations of more sedentary communities, rather than ignorant of their existence (Scott 2009). Texts produced in such an environment might be expected to be

2 See Sánchez Prado 2018 on Latin American literature as a kind of "world-making" world literature.

deeply engaged with place, genealogy, and other questions powerfully tied to the local. Theoretically speaking, the epichoric allows us to account for strictly local readings and experiences of texts, readings which take their local qualities seriously, even if such readings may in fact be second-order (and frequently nostalgic or ironic) reconstructions of an imagined past viewed from the perspective of a more complex present. This concept has been used extensively in thinking about representations of the local in archaic Greek myth and literature, where it is almost always found in conjunction with a Panhellenic perspective; the concept could certainly be applied elsewhere. It is very difficult to speak about epichoric texts in a historical context, both because they frequently are (or are imagined to be) quite stable in content and form over long periods of time and also because the act of reading such texts in a historical frame of reference inevitably removes them from a possible epichoric context (Nagy 1994, 1999).

2. My next ecology, the *panchoric* (a term I generalize from the Greek notion of the Panhellenic), emerges in a limited number of situations around the world: in the Ancient Near East; in Archaic and Classical Greece; in Warring States China; and perhaps in both the India of the Vedas and the Mayan world. The nature of textuality in both of the last two cases, however, makes it harder to apply the model, at least with respect to literature. What unites and typifies these cases is the unusual combination of small-scale polities, almost inevitably frequently at war with one another, together with an emergent sense of a shared culture. This shared culture, which develops as a synthesis of more local tradition or at least imagines itself as a synthesis of the local, establishes and consolidates a written literary language, in a context in which locals had used no previously existing written language. The concept of writing itself may well be borrowed from outside, as it was in Greece, but (also as with Greece) literary influence and circulation from dominant regional cultures was not foregrounded as a feature of new traditions as they emerged.[3] These new traditions often use literary devices, such as catalogues, genealogies, and anthologies, as a means of representing their synthetic sensibility.

I have found this notion of the panchoric useful in my comparative study of archaic and classical Greece on the one hand, and of Spring-and-Autumn and Warring States China on the other, as a frame for thinking about the composition, circulation, and interpretation of literary texts there

3 See, e.g., West 1997 for a discussion of the literary relations between archaic Greece and the Near East.

(*Authorship*). In so doing I have drawn significantly on the work of my teacher Gregory Nagy on the tensions between epichoric and Panhellenic readings within ancient Greek texts (1994, 1999). Other texts in the cultures I have identified as potentially panchoric would seem to lend themselves to a similar analysis, from the survey of Mesopotamian cities in the Sumerian *Temple Hymns* of Enheduanna, to the genealogies of poets in the *Rigveda*, to the mappings of journeys in the pre-Islamic *qasida*. The panchoric is a useful comparative and typological hermeneutic, but its emergence takes place at many different points in time, from the second millennium BC (in the case of Sumerian/Akkadian) to the early centuries AD (in the arguable case of Mayan writing), depending on when particular regions begin to adopt writing and to create larger-scale networks of polities (engaged in trade and/or war). Moreover, the context may be somewhat different from place to place, as in some regions the panchoric seems connected to primary state-formation, while elsewhere (as in Greece) the panchoric as we know it may be more the consequence of later stages of the re-formation of states after a period of collapse (Yoffee 2005). China is a different case again, in that the Chinese tradition always represented early Chinese history as reflecting the aftermath of the collapse of a primary unity, when it might in fact better have been understood in terms of the coexistence of a range of polities, each of which became prominent in a different era (Chang 1999).

3. *Cosmopolitan* literary cultures are those which imagine themselves as universal, and which are used by rulers and others to represent visions of universal power.[4] These languages typically begin either as panchoric languages whose range dramatically increase, or as vernaculars that eventually rival or supplant altogether the already-existing cosmopolitan languages against which they emerged. Forces such as conquest, trade, and migration often offer partial explanations for the spread of cosmopolitan languages, but these forces alone cannot explain the ongoing use of these languages long after their initial impetus has been spent. There are a limited number of languages which could be considered cosmopolitan in this sense: Summerian and Akkadian, perhaps; more certainly Greek, Latin, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, and classical Chinese.

Often the emergence of a cosmopolitan culture is a question of degree or perception, rather than one of an absolute paradigm shift, as we can see from a quick scan of the limited number of case studies. Akkadian and Sumerian,

4 See Pollock 1996 for the establishment of the term in this sense, and Pollock 2009 for his further development of the idea.

I would argue, move from panchoric to cosmopolitan as they cease to relate to spoken languages, and as their use spreads beyond Mesopotamia to Syria, the Levant, and the Hittite world. Greek becomes cosmopolitan as Macedonian conquests cause it to replace Aramaic as the lingua franca of the east, and the status of Greek as a cosmopolitan literary language long outlasts the Hellenistic kingdoms that fostered it in both Roman and Parthian territories. Latin becomes cosmopolitan alongside the spread of Roman imperial power, and particularly as it becomes the dominant inscriptional and literary language in North Africa, Gaul, and Spain. Notably, these regions possess other written languages at various stages of development, all of which fade away long before the collapse of Roman power, even though the process of replacing local languages with Latin was still underway during the late empire. Latin's status as cosmopolitan is, of course, something that continues well into early modern times in Europe, in spite of the absence of any polity or dynasty for whom it is native. Classical Chinese, I would argue, shifts toward a more cosmopolitan outlook as we move into the Han era, with large-scale conquests of nonethnic Han peoples and the use of texts in the classical form as a means of both administering and legitimating rule in that empire. Use of the language beyond territories ruled by the Han dynasty, beginning with the Korean states in the fourth century, was also an important turning point. The classical register of Sanskrit has ties to very ancient forms, but its cosmopolitan status arguably postdates that of its supposed "daughter" language, Prakrit (Ollett 2017). Cosmopolitan Sanskrit is certainly elevated by its use by the Gupta empire, but its spread to South India and as far afield as Java and Angkor Wat cannot so easily be explained. It is the critical piece of evidence behind Sheldon Pollock's notion of Sanskrit as a cosmopolitan literary language (Pollock 2009). Arabic naturally spreads with Islam and with the conquests of Muhammad, but its continued spread, reaching as far as Timbuktu and Java by the thirteenth century, cannot simply be explained in terms of conquest.[5] Modern Persian emerges as a literary language with Rudaki (ca. 941), beginning in Bukhara (in modern Uzbekistan), and spreads across the Muslim world and across South Asia. There is no clearer sign of the cosmopolitan status of Persian than its use as a powerful literary and administrative language for the Mughal empire (a Turkic dynasty ruling speakers of mostly Indic languages), and indeed its continued use under British rule in India until 1835, and Thomas Babington Macaulay's infamous "Minute on Indian Education" (a text important, among other reasons, for establishing

5 See Ricci 2011 on the Arabic literary cosmpolis in South and Southeast Asia.

that European imperialism would no longer resemble more traditional Eurasian cosmopolitan empires of the early modern period).[6] Each of these vast literary languages outlasts by centuries, or even millennia, the forces that gave them life, and each spreads over a geographic area well beyond those reached by conquest or colonization.

4. *Vernacular* literary cultures, which by my definition emerge in reaction to cosmopolitan ones, similarly emerge at distinct chronological moments. Vernaculars claim to speak to smaller, more localized, communities than cosmopolitan languages but need not be territorialized or nationalized; indeed, in medieval Europe and South Asia alike, writers often chose specific vernaculars for reasons of genre rather than based on their own ethnic origin or on their expected national audience, much as Dante argues in the *De vulgari eloquentia* that French is better suited to prose, Occitan to poetry. Pollock notes the emergence of Kannada as a vernacular in South India at approximately the same time as Anglo-Saxon emerges (in the seventh or eighth century, roughly), and we might note that this is about the time Japanese emerges as well. But other vernaculars are even earlier: beginning, I would argue, with Ugaritic in the fourteenth century BC; Latin in the third century BC; old Irish and Armenian in the fifth century AD; and so on. Other vernaculars, particularly those in the Romance and Indic language families (and therefore relatively close to Latin and Sanskrit, respectively) emerge as literary languages early in the second millennium AD, while in Chinese a standardized literary vernacular does not emerge until the twentieth century. In Arabic, such a standardized vernacular has yet to emerge, though in both cases there is an extensive historical use of vernacular elements in classical works, and indeed, of specific genres entirely in the vernacular.

It is here that the comparative-historical begins to resemble something like the world-historical, and the biome to resemble the ecozone. There are, to be sure, earlier waves of vernacular literatures in the centuries BC, but beginning in the first millennium AD, alongside the consolidation of cosmopolitan literatures, we begin to see the consistent emergence of vernacular literature and vernacular literary elements and tendencies, nearly everywhere. The interplay between the two, cosmopolitan and vernacular, becomes nearly everywhere a central preoccupation of literary history, and because this is happening simultaneously across Eurasia, it becomes possible to use this interplay as the major narrative of a large-scale literary history that has room

6 For two very different comparative approaches to the comparison of early modern and earlier empires, see the introduction to Crossley 2002 and Lieberman 2009.

for other narrative elements (such as the borrowings of prose fiction across large cultural borders through works such as the *Pancatantra* and the Alexander Romance).[7]

5. The *national* literary model emerges out of the vernacular-cosmopolitan system, but with the important distinction that there is now assumed to be a homology between language, people, and nation. In this system, cosmopolitan languages fade in importance, lacking all-important nation-states as backers, and literary language becomes ever more tightly integrated into the emergent national political system. This ecology emerges more rapidly, since its spread is hastened by European imperialism. In Europe itself, I date the emergence of the concept of formation of national literature to the displacement of Latin and the increased association of the vernacular with the nation-state over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, beginning with the Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts in 1539, which establishes French, not Latin, as the language of government in France; note, too that this is also the era of du Bellay and Ronsard, important advocates for vernacular literature. The national-literary phenomenon spreads beyond the Anglo-French origins of the nation-state as a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars, across Europe and the Americas. Already by the early nineteenth century, the beginnings of a national-literary discourse were developing in select parts of the non-West: in the Arab world because of the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, and in Bengal in South Asia, under direct British rule since the 1750s (one of the first large colonial regions outside the Americas to come under direct European governance, rather than interacting with small European commercial entrepôts). Other parts of the non-Western world began to adopt national-literary models as Western influence grew, until by the early to mid twentieth century, the model was almost universal.

6. My *global* ecology is, like the epichoric, a limit-case, a hypothetical future rather than an actually existing present; a frictionless utopia of literary circulation, in which texts circulate without constraints of any kind. We clearly do not live in such a world, and the years 2015–2018 have made such a future seem even less probable than before. Nonetheless, literature is reaching toward the global in all kinds of ways, from literary prizes (the Booker, Cervantes, Camoes) open to all writers in a given language, to works of literature that are "born translated," to the academic phenomenon of world literature itself (Walkowitz 2015).

7 For a very rough sketch of this latter narrative, see Beecroft 2018b.

I conclude with a few thoughts on the uses of literary ecology. My ecologically oriented typology can certainly inform local literary histories, which can trace, for example, the negotiations between vernacular and cosmopolitan languages, or the emergence of a national literature from a vernacular. But these six ecologies are not themselves a history of world literature, nor can they be used to write one. They are not a history of world literature in that, while I have listed them in what seems to be their historical sequence of emergence in the world, there is no teleology necessarily tying one to the other. No literature has unambiguously experienced all six in this sequence (though a case might be made for Chinese), and some have experienced these ecologies out of this sequence, moving, as Latin did, for example, from vernacular to cosmopolitan. They cannot be used to write a global literary history, either, partly for these same reasons, and partly because the typological comparisons that this ecological method opens up are themselves anti-historical. An ecological model for literary circulation allows us to compare, for example, the emergence of vernacular Japanese literature against the background of classical Chinese (in the seventh century AD) with the beginnings of Latin literature in the third century BC (Denecke 2013). It could just as well comparatively trace the emergence of the discourse of national literature in the nineteenth-century Arab world and Latin America, or the cosmopolitan poetics of, say, Persian and classical Chinese. Even more broadly, I hope, this method gives us the beginnings of a language to talk more generally about the relationships between culture and power in different historical contexts: to explore, for instance, why the Roman empire continued to use Greek as an administrative and cultural language throughout its era, while the British empire, after initially retaining the Persian of the Mughals, later required the use of English. These sorts of comparative projects might help us to understand that the *république mondiale des lettres* described by Pascale Casanova is only one literary ecology out of many others that have existed. But these ecologies cannot be, on their own, the story of world literature; history and theory, as it turns out, are not the same thing, and an ecological approach illuminates unexpected similarities and provides a language for shared conversation rather than a linear and teleological narrative for global literary history.

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11

From World Literature to World Philosophy and Back Again

SIMON DURING

The term "world literature" is ambiguous. Most often, of course, it denotes those texts from many cultures all around the world, stretching back into history, which are now recognized as constituting literature's core canon. Or it can name literature which has been integrated into today's global system. But I want to suggest that world literature may refer to something else too. It may name a genre. In this sense, it denotes writing that is written for and to the world in general, rather than for or to any *particular* community or readership.

This chapter is mainly concerned with this last sense of world literature, and in particular with Franz Kafka, whose writings, I will argue, can be regarded as exemplifying world literature understood this way. More exactly, it will describe a passage from the first sense of world literature (i.e., the world's literary heritage) to the third sense (i.e., world literature as literature written for anyone at all independently of particular cultural or national identities), as mediated by a particular moment in the history of philosophy – the moment when philosophy too became worlded, that is, when something that we can call "world philosophy" emerged on the world literature model.[1]

By "world philosophy" I mean, then, not just philosophy considered as a global archive (extending beyond the Eurocentric lineage) but world philosophy itself as a genre, i.e., philosophy written for and about the world as a whole, whether we think of the world as "alles, was ist der Fall" ("all that is the case") as Ludwig Wittgenstein did, riffing on Schopenhauer in the first sentence of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), or as Arthur Schophenhauer himself did in the first sentence of his *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1819): "Der Welt ist meine Vorstellung" ("the world is my idea")

1 This means that the sense in which I am using "world" here is rather different from the way it is deployed by postcolonialists such as Gayatri Spivak and Pheng Cheah in their concept of "worlding."

(Wittgenstein 1961: 5; Schopenhauer 2010: 3). For me, world philosophy in this sense was indeed elaborated by Schopenhauer, who built concepts taken both from ancient Stoicism and from old Asian thought into an atheist, anti-German-idealist system.

My chapter presents three distinct moments:

1. The moment when something like the category "world literature" first appeared. I will argue that it did so in England among a group of mid-eighteenth-century Anglican clergymen clustered around William Warburton, whom David Hume, their enemy, called the Warburtonians, and among whom, in this context, Thomas Percy is the most important (Hume 1987: 15).
2. Schopenhauer's re-assemblage of Asian and European thought so as to produce a profoundly influential philosophy of the world – "profoundly influential" not so much on philosophy itself as on European intellectual culture more widely in the period ca. 1860 to ca. 1920.
3. Kafka's writings, which, I contend, belong to the Schopenhauerean aftermath, and which, partly for that reason, can be understood as a mode of literature which neither emerges from any particular literary/rhetorical lineage or tradition nor is directed toward, or written in the interests of, any knowable community or readership, but rather to and of the world itself.

But before I begin to make my case, some clearing of the ground.

The notion that world literature can also be a genre is not new. One version of the idea can be found in the concept of "global fiction" as recently put forward by Tim Parks (2010). Here global literature is defined as that form of writing which these days is written to be read across many languages and which therefore maximizes its translatability, whether linguistic or cultural. A dull mode, so Parks thinks, he associates it with authors like Haruki Murakimi, Per Petterson, and Orhan Pamuk. But this concept, whatever its virtues, bears little or no relation to our concept of generic world literature, let alone to Kafka in particular, most of whose work was, after all, published posthumously, and ambiguously against his will, for unimagined readers.

"Global literature" takes on another sense in Alexander Beecroft's *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day*. For Beecroft, global literature is literature written in a globally prominent language, and he is primarily interested in the conditions under which such writing may appear. But for Beecroft, global literature may also have particular literary qualities: he notes that today, in writers like Roberto Bolaño and Amitav

Ghosh, transnational languages produce "multistrand narratives to tell global stories," and these represent literature in its most advanced form globally (2015: 233). Again this has no relation to the world literature genre to which Kafka contributes.

Beecroft's analysis is genetic, as was Pascale Casanova's in her influential *The World Republic of Letters*. Beecroft thinks of world literature as developing in stages from corpuses with local circulation into increasingly cosmopolitan and aestheticized forms. And he accepts the force of what Casanova called the "Herderian revolution," the transformative moment when literature began to be understood not as a set of rhetorical deployments and generic modes but as the linguistic expression of a particular people or nation so as to enable local literatures collectively to be archived as world literature (Casanova 2004: 75–81). Whereas Herder affirmed older local literatures against France's then European hegemony, Casanova and Beecroft offer progressivist accounts of literature's stadial de-localization. Although their concept of world literature is rooted in distant pasts, they themselves have no identitarian investment in returning to roots.

My category "world literature" is formally independent of the Herderian revolution and analysis in its wake. Indeed, when it comes to uncovering the conditions under which world literature became a genre, it is less useful to think about space, power, and the circulation of languages than it is to think about religious and intellectual history as well as writing as a spiritual-aesthetic practice.

The Warburtonians

Famously, the concept of world literature began its public career when, in 1827, Wolfgang von Goethe announced "the epoch of world literature" (Eckermann 1984: 184). What sparked Goethe's comment?

Goethe had been reading a translation of a Chinese novel, *Yujiao li,* and when his secretary Johann Eckermann remarked that it must have been a strange experience for him, he demurred. Calling on his knowledge of translated Chinese novels, and in particular of *Hau Kiou Choaan* – the first Chinese novel to be translated into a European language – Goethe insisted that the Chinese novel's characters "denken, handeln und empfinden fast ebenso wie wir, und man fühlt sich sehr bald als ihresgleichen."[2] For Goethe

2 The novel was translated by the academic sinologist Jean-Pierre Abel-Remusat and published in 1826 in French as *Iu-kiao-li ou Les Deux cousins*.

here, the epoch of world literature named the moment when literature about people whose minds and manners were like our own could potentially come from anywhere.[3]

For all that, the translations from the Chinese that prompted Goethe's reflections had a particular history.[4] The European interest in Chinese fiction had been triggered about sixty years earlier when Thomas Percy organized *Hau Kiou Choaan*'s publication in English.[5] This book's context is important since Percy's scholarship helps form a basis of the world literature concept, and it needs to be understood in the light of social and intellectual forces that later historiographies of world literature have largely forgotten. In particular, Percy's contribution was enabled by shifts in, and discussions about, literature's relation to religion.

By the time he died in 1811, Thomas Percy was a famous European man of letters. That was a result of his efforts as editor and compiler of orature and literature from around the world in a moment when the globe as a whole could be conceived of as a literary space. The first Chinese novel that Goethe had read had appeared anonymously in English in 1761 under the title *Hau Kiou Choaan, or the Pleasing History,* and was Percy's first book in this mode. Percy himself knew no Chinese: *Hau Kiou Choaan*'s first three volumes were edited versions of a translation by an East India Company employee which Percy had come across by chance in manuscript, although the last volume was translated separately from a Portuguese manuscript.[6] The book was not a commercial success, but the next year Percy went on to publish two further volumes of China-related materials as *Miscellaneous Pieces Relating to the Chinese*. That year he also published a volume consisting of stories about widows from various cultures, including China. These publications were followed by translations of old poetry from the Icelandic, including a version of the *Edda*, as well as by his own translation of the *Song of Solomon* from the Hebrew. He projected further volumes that collected

3 For more context on Goethe's use of the term *Weltliteratur*, see Purdy 2014.

4 As Günther Debon has shown, Goethe used a German translation of the English translation of *Hau Kiou Choaan*. See Debon 1985.

5 See Puchner 2014 for a discussion of Goethe's reading of Chinese fiction. The background of the actual discussion with Eckermann which established the category of "world literature" is a little unclear since, as I say, although it is based on Goethe's recent reading of *Iu Kiao Li*, it refers back to other unnamed Chinese novels that Goethe knew, and in particular to *Hau Kiou Choaan* whose plot Goethe there alludes to.

6 I am not here concerned to delve into the relationship between European imperialism and the gathering of the MS upon which Percy's work depends, but of course there was one at least in regard to MS from Asia and the Americas (but not from Northern Europe). For more on that topic, see Ahmed 2013 and Bhattacharya 2016.

Islamic, native American, North African, Welsh, Spanish, Peruvian, Latin, Saxon, and South Asian prose and verse (Davis 1989: 92–93). But his reputation was secured in 1765 by the enormously successful *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, a collection of English ballads which scholars have often supposed prepared the ground for that shift of literary sensibility that was more fully realized some thirty years later in Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (see McLane 2001).

In short: Percy not only planned a basic world literature archive, his oeuvre gave an impetus to what would become known as European romanticism. It did so in part by breaking with older theories about the directions of literature's transcontinental transmission, namely (1) that it moved from East to West, or (2) (following Paul-Henri Mallet's and George Hickes's researches into premodern Scandinavian literature) from north to south. Now literature came from any direction – or (as we will see) from none at all: from out of humanity itself.

Two of Percy's editorial habits are especially notable. The first is that he was not especially concerned with distinguishing between what was old and what was new among the works he put into circulation. His central interests were not primarily philological even if he himself commanded considerable philological skills. *Hau Kiou Choaan*, for instance, was not an ancient canonical Chinese fiction but a seventeenth-century Qing dynasty, *caizi jiaren* (talent and beauty) novel, a popular and condescended-to genre. It was a marriage-plot novel with some surprising similarities to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. Similarly, some of the ballads collected in *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* were modern, and Percy had revised most of the old ones to meet contemporary expectations. In short, Percy's compilations paid less attention to his texts' provenance than to their literary qualities. It was this too that enabled Percy's oeuvre to extend across the division that structures world literature today, i.e., between world literature as an ancient heritage (which would cover the *Edda* or the *Song of Solomon*) and world literature as a global system (which would cover *Hau Kiou Choaan*).

Percy's compilations do not express cultural nationalism either. This differentiates them from other eighteenth-century contributions to emergent world literature (see Pittock 1973: 29–33). Thus James Macpherson's supposed translations from Ossian's Gaelic, which appeared more or less simultaneously with Percy's early publications, were connected to a Scottish local antiquarianism (see Manning 1982). They lacked a global perspective, and their spirit was to be appropriated by various romantic nationalisms,

including Herder's. But Percy's project was not culturalist or nationalist in this way. It was *not* part of the Herderian revolution.

So how are we to account for the emergence of this religio-literary – rather than philological, culturalist, or nationalist – idea of world literature?

Percy was what we might call a literary parson, that is to say a man who held Anglican office but who produced secular literature for the marketplace. The enabling conditions for his work were articulated by the Warburtonians in general. The core members of the group, Warburton himself along with Richard Hurd and John Brown, were associated with a wider circle of parsons of whom the most notable were William Mason and the Warton brothers, Joseph and Thomas. And their program drew on and resonated with other writers with Whig affiliations, including Horace Walpole and Thomas Gray, whose ode "The Bard," published by Walpole in 1757, was important to the movement.[7] A younger, more secular scholar like William Jones, the pioneering orientalist and the subject of Bhattacharya's chapter in this volume, while outside the circle, owed much to the Warburtonians as well. His early *Poems, Consisting Chiefly of Translation from the Asiatick Languages* (1772) was in the Warburtonian spirit as was his more academic *Poeseos asiaticae commentariorum libri sex* (1774), an account of rhythm's universality across languages.

Percy himself was a second-generation Warburtonian. Thus, for instance, his edition of *Hau Kiou Choaan* drew on Hurd's remarks on the Chinese drama, which had been attached to Hurd's edition of Horace's *Epistola ad Augustum* (1751), and which Percy reprinted in his *Miscellaneous Pieces Pertaining to the Chinese* (Hurd 1751). The preface to *Miscellaneous Pieces* also engages somewhat fawningly with Warburton, whose account of the progress from picture writing to the alphabet in *Divine Legation of Moses* Percy accepts.

Nonetheless, these networks and borrowings are less relevant to us than the Warburtonian's intellectual and religious positions, which were defined as much by their choice of antagonists as by their positive programs. The Warburtonians were, first, opposed to the deism that had appeared in England after 1688. It was in this context that the group accepted that Christianity was not itself grounded by reason, which Warburton was

7 Gray's so-called Pindaric odes – most based on Icelandic themes – were sparked by Warburton suggesting to Mason and Gray that they follow up Alexander Pope's sketch for a history of English poetry. In attempting to execute this plan, Gray used George Hickes's philological work on Icelandic which inspired his own imitations of old Norse poetry. See Williams 2014.

capable of dismissing as a "mere abstract notion" (Warburton 1788, I: 85). In the end, religion relied on revelation. Thus, they abandoned those rationalist arguments for Christianity that had long been used by scholasticism and were currently being made in new terms by Anglican theologians such as Joseph Butler as well as by natural theologians of the type then associated with the Boyle lectures. For the Warburtonians, Christianity was to be approached historically and humanistically, not metaphysically or theologically. They believed, however, that while Christianity's special power of salvation was revealed by Christ, it also engaged the wider social function of religion as such, namely to sanction and police civil society. It was as a religion in this manner (which required wide-ranging comparative inquiry into deep history across the globe for its proof and justification) that Christianity needed to be thought about historically and functionally rather than as divine revelation.

For the Warburtonians, however, religion was also literary. Their argument went like this: good social order could not be produced just by reason and benevolence, it needed supernatural sanction. Hence non-Christian societies require leaders and geniuses (such as Homer or David) or Machiavellian "armed prophets" whose rhetorics of critique, threat, prophecy, and providential favor, and whose invocations of religious semi-divine heroes, could preserve good order, whether these leaders/bards themselves believed their own stories or not. For John Brown, in particular, such bards were more effective in a republican Commonwealth than in a despotic state (Brown 1763: 94). On the other hand, the imaginative energy embedded in chivalric stories, "Northern Antiquities," and Eastern romances opened channels for religious illumination in their readers. Thus, Thomas Warton argued that Milton's sensitivity to the divine had been sparked by romance reading in his youth (Warton 1762, II: 33). Despite all this, the Warburtonians believed that literature was under threat. Like religion, it was at risk of being abandoned to what Brown called "more libertine and relaxed Principles" (1763: 45).

We can summarize the Warburtonian position like this: if literature was a tool by which, at least in the old days, religion could carry out its social task not so much to delight and instruct, à la Horace and neoclassicism, as to awe and threaten. As Brown put it in general terms: poetry (like music) began in "such Passions and Principles of Action, as are *common* to the whole *Race* of *Man*" and thus can be "most effectually investigated . . . by viewing Man in his *savage* or *uncultivated* state," all the more so because it was then primarily concerned with "great and important Subjects relative to the public State" (1763: 26, 44). The inherited archive of such "primitive" declamations "relative

to the public State" was open to recovery by scholarly parsons who, in the process, began to establish "world literature." They did so *against* as much as *for* contemporary secular civil society.

The Warburtonian's most important antagonist was civility itself as this had been promoted in Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* (1711). *Characteristics* was especially important in this context because it was a primary source for the belief that social peace could prevail without religious sanction. Its promotion of ridicule, wit, beauty, conversation, and an innate moral sense in the interests of polish and moral reform, seemed to them to accede to the age's irreligion and loss of virtue. This was the thrust of John Brown's first book, an explicit critique of Shaftesbury, which Warburton claimed that he had helped write (see Templeman 1953).

The Warburtonians became men of letters in order to wrest literature away from civility. In the process, they articulated terms for what we might call "impolite" literature across cultures. In one direction, their literary interests led them to editorial work of the kind that made Percy's name. It also led them into literary criticism. Thus, both Warburton's reading of Virgil's *Aeneid* in *Divine Legation* and John Brown's counter-reading of Homer in *Poetry and Music* were committed to demonstrating that, in the past, great literature was concerned, openly or not, with arts of government and its relationship to the gods. This is true even if Brown, like Thomas Warton before him, not only dismisses Warburton's (and Joseph Scaliger's) preference for Virgil over Homer but attacks Thomas Blackwell for claiming in his pioneering *An Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1736) that Homer was a polite poet (Brown 1763 and Warton 1762, I: 95).

In another direction, the Warburtonian's program led them toward a particular understanding of literature. Positioning literature as a handmaiden to religion's universal governmental functions led the Warburtonians to theories that emphasized form over content. Literature's local moral or ethical content was secondary to the forms in which it became charismatic.

This position was theorized most cogently by Hurd in the "dissertations" attached to his 1751 Horace edition, when he insisted that literature was concerned not with instruction and delight à la Horace, but with pleasure, passion, and desire, and that pleasure and desire tended to be satisfied by similar forms across different cultures independently of context and substance.[8] That was what enabled him to think of poetry as "universal" in

8 There is more work to be done on the relation between the Warburtonians and the Voltaire of the *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (first complete edition 1769) and

his "A Dissertation on Universal Poetry" – Hurd's "universal poetry" marking an important step toward the concept of world literature. Admittedly we need to note that Hurd's theory shares something with David Hume's aesthetics as sketched out a few years later in his "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757). For Hume taste is universal because all literature is based on "beauties" whose rhetorical energy excites pleasure and "agreeable sentiments" across people from all cultures (Hume 1987: 233). And if Hurd offered a pathbreaking, proto-romantic account of "universal poetry," Hume's more Shaftesburyian analysis was destined to reach further into Western intellectual life since, via Kant's third critique, it formed a basis for modern philosophical aesthetics. But it was Hurd's analysis that underpins the particular genealogy of world literature's emergence that I have been tracing in this chapter.

That universal human needs continually produced the *same* kinds of literary plots and figures and rhythms in different times and places was the more particular argument of Hurd's important essay on imitation (a section of which Brown reprinted in his *Chinese Miscellanies* volume), which argued that the plots of Chinese drama conformed to the rules that ordered Greek drama too. In that sense, as well, literature was global. John Brown made similar arguments but, because he was mainly interested in poetry and song, he (like William Jones later) emphasized rhythm, harmony, and melody.

And here we reach the crux of our case since I want to insist that, even though Percy nowhere makes this explicit, this version of formalism, based on the idea of universal poetry, justified his publication of *Hau Kiou Choaan* precisely as an Anglican vicar. It demonstrated literature's (governmental) qualities independently of particular culture and values. Indirectly, this would lead Goethe to acknowledge world literature as an archive from anywhere and anytime, written or sung by people whose minds and manners were, despite everything, similar to our own. But the take-away point here for us is just that world literature was assembled by the Warburtonians outside both the "Herderian revolution" and Europe's polite modern civility.

Schopenhauer and World Philosophy

Let us now jump forward and move from England to Germany. In 1819, a book by a private scholar appeared under the title *Die Welt als Wille und*

the *Essay on Epic Poetry* (1727) who pioneered the mode of cosmopolitan, comparative philosophic history that also underpins the world literature concept.

Vorstellung (*The World as Will and Representation*). Although for a long time it was little read, the book made a decisive intervention. By the 1870s, Arthur Schopenhauer's "pessimistic" philosophy had, as Hans-Georg Gadamer puts it, "acquired enormous popular influence" to the degree that in Germany at least it was thought of as definitive of the epoch's mood (Gadamer 2000: 58). It marks the beginning of the moment when, in Hannah Arendt's words, "it began to dawn upon modern man that he had come to live in a world in which his mind and his tradition of thought were not even capable of asking adequate, meaningful questions, let alone of giving answers to its own perplexities" (1961: 9).

This is not the place to outline Schopenhauer's thought in any detail. It matters to us here simply because it broke with philosophical/ideological hegemony not just by refusing Christianity but, more profoundly, by refusing humanism and progressivism of the kind embraced both by German idealism after Kant and by English empiricism after Locke. It was, one might venture, the first thoroughly philosophical rejection of the enlightenment project. And it was so, by Schopenhauer's own account, because it had learned from non-Western thought and, in particular, from the Hindu Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, and later from Buddhism too (see App 1998, 2006).

For all that, Schopenhauer was a disciple of Kant. He accepted: (1) that everything we know we know experientially, and that means our knowledge has strict limits; (2) that our experience becomes knowable only because it obeys the "principle of sufficient reason" – i.e., the rule that *nothing is without a reason for why it is rather than is not.* One of Schopenhauer's achievements was to distinguish between different forms of this principle and to bring (physical) causes, (agential) reasons and motives, and (epistemological) grounds under one head. His basic point, however, was that we can know the world only as determined, in sequences of cause and effect.

But for Schopenhauer, as for Kant, the world we know like that is not the "real" world. The real world is *not* causally organized. Nor is it broken down into particulars or individuals. Indeed individuation (the *principium individuationis*) is, for Schopenhauer, as it is for Buddhism, one of the most powerful and problematic of illusions, and recognition of this illusion is love's basis. Yet Schopenhauer argued that Kant was wrong to suppose that the real world lay epistemologically out of reach in a domain of "things in themselves." Rather, we have oblique access to the real world by virtue of what we feel and how we act (our "self-consciousness"). Schopenhauer named this real world constituted by the force which leads us to feel and act "Will." Here he makes a mystical leap: for him all motion, whether organic or inorganic, is

Will. Furthermore: while the world as known is caused and rationalized, "Will" moves endlessly independently of cause or intent. Nor do individuals have any meaning for Will.

One of philosophy's aims is to direct us toward detaching ourselves from both illusions and the Will. Art is one tool for such detachment since, on the one hand, it allows us to contemplate the world as unconstrained by sufficient reason's mere intelligibility: it is, as Schopenhauer noted, "the way of regarding things independently of the principle of sufficient reason" (2010, I: 208). On the other side, in acts of genius allied to madness, art can also remove itself from Will so as to present quasi-Platonic "Ideas" to us, especially the idea of Man.

In very general terms, Schopenhauer belongs to the Warburtonian/Humean lineage. That he considers the idea of Man to be art's most significant idea suggests that, as does his disjoining the world as known from the world as Will. After all, this is to accept the analytic structure shared by Hume and the Warburtonians for which, in human nature, reason was enslaved by passion. But, crucially, Schopenhauer, again like the Warburtonians, detached literature from civility and reason, and in that gesture also turned to non-Western "world" sources and influences. Indeed, he first encountered Eastern texts through circles around Goethe and Herder in Weimar which drew indirectly on Hurd and Percy. Yet, as an open atheist, Schopehauer denounced the merely civil and progressive, whereas the British thinkers positioned literature within a theory of how God's revelations functioned within a universal affective/moral anthropology. In sum: for Schopenhauer, aesthetic works were neither functional nor expressive: they were metaphysical. Portals into the real.

This way of thinking allowed Schopenhauer to create a *world* philosophy in two senses. His system was, of course, worlded in the sense that it was built out of elements drawn from around the globe, from different cultures across deep time. But it was also *about* the world, which now becomes (as it had been for Stoicism) a basic metaphysical category that named totality outside of either God or nature. Whereas Hume, for instance, had used concepts like "understanding," "human nature," and "perception" as his philosophy's building blocks, Schopenhauer's philosophy, perhaps drawing on a hint on the last page of Kant's second critique, was intended to describe exactly and nothing less than the *world* in both its illusory and its real forms.[9] Human

9 See Kant 2002: 204. Here Kant says that modern rational philosophy now, for the first time, possesses the tools to produce "clear insight" into "world-structure" (*Weltgebäude*).

beings are "metaphysical animals" just because they become conscious of their finitude (or better the riddle of finitude) and the name of the finite but *whole* order of things in which they live and think is the *world* (Schopenhauer 2010, II: 160).

Kafka

Kafka writes in Schopenhauer's wake and thus creates what I am calling generic world literature. To make this argument does not require yet another interpretation of his work. Nor does it depend on those very useful analyses that have already proposed thinking of Kafka as a world literature writer in terms of his minority status within the German canon and his stupendous stature globally. I will proceed rather by uncovering channels and structures sufficiently broad to allow us to situate Kafka both in the Schopenhauerian aftermath and in the world literature genre as adumbrated by the Warburtonians.

Schopenhauer was everywhere in Kafka's milieu. Kafka met his friend Max Brod when he attended a lecture by Brod on the philosopher at a time when Brod was trying to establish a movement he called "indifferentism" based on Schopenhauer's ethics (see Johnson 1972: 271). Kafka owned most of Schopenhauer's *Sämtliche Werke*, a couple of the volumes of which contain his marginalia. It may be that Kafka only read Schopenhauer carefully in 1917, but there are many earlier traces of Schopenhauer's influence in his thinking. For instance, aged twenty-three, he jotted down some thoughts about aesthetics in an academic style he would never return to, and these imitate Schopenhauer: e.g., "every idea that does not fall into the sphere of the will arouses aesthetic pleasure" (Kafka 2012: 9). Later, in his so-called Zürau aphorisms, Kafka was able to express a Schopenhauerian Gnosticism: "There is nothing other than a spiritual world [*geistige Welt*]; what we call the world of the senses is the evil in the spiritual world" from which he developed an insight into how language can escape that Schopenhauerian plight in which ordinary experiences are limited and false: "For everything outside the phenomenal world, language can only be used allusively, but never even approximately in a comparative way" (1991: 91–92).

More significantly still, in a 1912 letter to Felice Bauer in which Kafka remembers the moment when, as Reiner Stach puts it, he "came across the central wish of his life, and recognized its consequences," namely (now in Kafka's own words): "to attain a view of life (and – this was inescapably bound up with it – to convince others of it in writing) in which life retained its

natural full complement of rising and falling, but at the same time would be recognized no less clearly as a nothing, as a dream, a hovering" (Stach 2016: 204). That "view of life" as nothing, as dream, as hovering is another version of Schopenhauerian aesthetic contemplation: here not only does temporality lose its historical and progressive dimensions, but the known world, seen in its truth, passes into the *irreal*, a philosophical term popularized in the late twentieth century by Nelson Goodman to connote certain counterfactual modalities of thinking outside the *real*. The term is not synonymous with the common usage of "unreal" (1978).

That was not quite the spirit in which Kafka was actually to write, however. For him the act of writing was not contemplative at all: rather it was, as it were, a spiritual practice performed mainly at night, sometimes ecstatically, more often in intense self-doubt and suffering (like the "eternal torments of dying"), in which, as he put it, "all his forces [were] concentrated" so that "the tremendous world that I have in my head" – "a dreamlike inner life" – was set free.[10] When writing, Kafka did not think of himself as contemplating an ideal, if more real, world *à la* Schopenhauerian aesthetics. By his own account, he exposed himself to an oneiric, creative state adequate to the world's own *irreality* in and through the discipline of writing itself.

This is so even if he sometimes described his writing process in more conventional terms. After writing "The Country Doctor," for instance, he was able self-critically to note: "I can still have passing satisfaction from works like 'A Country Doctor', provided I can still write such things at all (very improbable). But happiness only if I can raise the world into the pure, the true, and the immutable" (cited in Stach 2013: 231). This is, once more, an orthodox Schopenhauerian remark insofar as it implies that the products of his spiritual/oneiric practices of writing may articulate quasi-Platonic forms. We might say that Kafka's Schopenhauerianism needs to be traced in the passages between his Schopenhauerian idea that his fictions revealed the truth and his no less Schopenhauerian idea that in doing so, they invoked the *irreal* through creative acts allied to madness.

Kafka's connections to Schopenhauer can be described in less general but still broad terms:

1. When Kafka wrote he often created fictional worlds whose plots and motivations did not adhere to the principle of sufficient reason. The usual

10 These phrases are drawn from different journal jottings. The first is from August 1914 (Kafka 1948: 302); the second from January 1912 (p. 163); the third from June 1913 (p. 288); the fourth from August 1914 again (p. 302).

epistemological apparatus based on that principle – the explaining of actions, thoughts, and feelings in terms of causes, motives, and intentions – is repeatedly broken in them. This is one Schopenhauerian basis of their "Kafkaesque" quality.

2. What Kafka produced was indeed, as he put it himself (in his remarks on "A Country Doctor" just cited), a "world." His fictions were not realist and mimetic; they were not expressive of particular moods, insights, thoughts, passions; they were not intentionally willed; they were not even meaningful in any easily graspable way. They were just *there* in words produced by Kafka's particular writing practice. It is their bare *thereness* at the edge of mimesis, expression, and meaning that allows us to regard them as constituting (irreal) worlds, if perhaps also ideal forms.
3. Typically, Kafka's fictions were not just other to the world as organized by sufficient reason but irreconciliable with it. As his diaries reveal, the writing practice out of which they were created was likewise difficult to reconcile to everyday life. Schopenhauer thought that creative genius required an "admixture of madness," and Kafka's writing, as a nocturnal, oneiric, resistant act, instantiates something in this vein.

Within this broad framework, more specific Schopenhauerian arguments shape Kafka's work too. In *The World as Will and Representation*'s first book, Schopenhauer contends that "motives" are "principles of intelligibility" for drives which are themselves ceaseless, groundless, and unfathomable (2010, I: 188). This is to propose that intentionality is an *ex post facto* interpretation of earlier impulses, impulses which rationality cannot fully know. In this model, motives are disjunct from actions and causes. Exactly this disjunction is often narrativized by Kafka. His plots often develop just by disconnecting or eliminating motives, causes, and actions. Take a famous instance: in *The Castle,* K's claim to have been summoned to the castle as a land-surveyor, a summons which nobody seems to know anything about and which, it turns out, cannot actually be the true motive for K's journeying there, since he is probably not a land-surveyor at all (Schopenhauer 2010, I: 165). His action is disjunct from motive, perhaps from intention too.

Later, in *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer also argues that an individual "only truly exists in the present, and the unchecked flight of the present into the past is a continuous passage into death, a constant dying" (2010, I: 337). Kafka's stories also routinely prioritize the present over the past and future in this way. Although they are usually told in the past tense, it is a past which the characters experience as a sequence of often

unexpected presents, only minimally ordered by either intentionality or memory. In cases which fully accept the logic of this temporality, death may indeed be the terminus. Take *The Trial*'s last chapter in which this logic is enacted. K is taken away to be killed by a couple of strange executioners whom it is not at all clear whether K was expecting and whom K insouciantly misrecognizes or pretends to misrecognize as stage actors. Here that "constant dying," which is what Schopenhauer considers living in the world to be, is all but paradigmatically narrated in a desert of motive, cause, and intention.

Schopenhauer's philosophy was nowhere more marked by Indian thought than in its ethics, which insists that worldly success and satisfaction are aspects of immiseration and duress, and that other people's sufferings are our own too. How so? Because at the level of the thing-in-itself (as against the phenomenal world), good and evil are just passages of the Will. Schopenhauer expresses this thought vividly by declaring that, seen properly, "the tormentor and tormented are one," as too are the offender and the offended (2010, I: 381). This is another thought that grounds Kafka's fiction, where the identity of torturer and tortured repeatedly takes narrative form. It does so most obviously in "In the Penal Colony" where, at the end, the torturer turns the torture machine on himself. But in *The Trial* and *The Castle*, K is also simultaneously an offender and an offended, a victim and an accuser just because his story judges the world as an enigmatic theater of cruelty. From this Schopenhauerian perspective, Kafka's fictions assume that moral and juridical judgments are ontologically superficial – unable to divide judge from judged – since they cannot latch onto the world as it really is. They belong merely to the world as representation. This is to radicalize the critique of cosmopolitan civility with which we have become familiar in thinking about world literature's origins.

In sum: Kafka's remoteness from the practical world ordered by sufficient reason as well as his shunting of "Will" into the domains of inspiration, dream, and imagination mark him out as Schopenhauerian writer. But precisely because his works are thus detached from tradition and ordinariness, they join world literature generically. They are written for nobody in particular or anyone at all. Being ungrounded in a transmitted tradition, convention, or genre, their world is not presented to its readers as *a* world but rather as *the* world, and so to reveal themselves to belong to a genealogy, admittedly a crooked genealogy, reaching back (surprisingly enough) to a group of eighteenth-century Anglican parsons.

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12

Saving Europe through *Weltliteratur*: The Case of Victor Klemperer

THEO D'HAEN

In more recent discussions of world literature, much has been made of the fact that for the longest time what counted as world literature was European literature. This is true in an objective sense, in that most pre-1980s discussions of world literature indeed limited themselves to European literature, and often even to a very select group of European literatures: French, English, German, Italian, and Spanish. The Eurocentrism of the concept was heavily criticized already in the 1960s by René Etiemble. Since the 1990s, almost every theorist of world literature has commented on the European bias in conceptions of world literature. Already in 1959 (published 1960) Werner Friederich ironized that "world literature" – at least as taught in US undergraduate courses in the discipline – in fact meant "NATO-literatures," and even then what was actually taught restricted itself again to the five European literatures just enumerated. Most often such Eurocentrism is blamed on the obtuseness of European or American scholars when it comes to recognizing that there is such a thing as worthwhile literature beyond Europe, or by extension beyond literature in Western languages. In other words, it is a "natural" consequence or corollary of the almost evident superiority Europe, or the West, felt with regard to "the rest" of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the period in which the concept of world literature was developed within Western scholarship, most often as part of, or in conjunction with, the discipline of comparative literature. I have sketched all of this more extensively in my *Routledge Concise History of World Literature* (2012). What I want to argue here is that a restriction of "world literature" to "European literature," and even to only a very few of the literatures that make up the latter, could also serve as a deliberate strategic gesture determined by circumstances of place and time. My *angriffspunkt* or point of departure is Victor Klemperer's essay "Weltliteratur und europäische Literatur."

These days, Victor Klemperer (1881–1960) is best known for the diaries he kept throughout his life, and for his observations on the debasement of the German language under Nazism, on which he published a famous book in 1947: *LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (*The Language of the Third Reich*). Klemperer was born a Jew in 1881, but in 1912 converted to Protestantism. He also was married to a non-Jewish woman, and the combination, together with his being a decorated World War I veteran, kept him out of the hands of the Nazis. He did lose his job as Professor of Romance Languages at the Technical University of Dresden in 1934. Moreover, he was never really completely safe during the period 1933–45. In early February 1945 notice was served to the few remaining people of Jewish descent in Dresden about their imminent deportation. Although Klemperer did not receive notice, he feared he might be next. In the immediate aftermath of the allied fire-bombing of Dresden on February 14, 1945, he and his wife escaped from the city to American-held territory. After the war, he was reinstated as a university professor, teaching at Dresden, Greifswald, Halle-Wittenberg, and finally the Humboldt University in Berlin. Klemperer was largely forgotten after his death in 1960, but when his diaries were published in 1995 his reputation soared again, both in Germany but also internationally (Richards 1999). His works detailing the Hitler years caught the attention of the public. It is these, along with the volume covering the years up to 1959, when Klemperer was a prominent intellectual in the German Democratic Republic, that have been published in English as *I Shall Bear Witness: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1933–41*, *To the Bitter End: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1942–1945,* and *The Lesser Evil: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1945–1959*. All three volumes were translated by Martin Chalmers. The bulk of Klemperer's scholarly publications in German, however, have stayed under the radar of the English-language academic world. In a recent article, Román Facundo Espino cites Chalmers explaining the neglect of Klemperer's work after his death in 1960 by the fact that "For the West, he was tainted by association with the GDR and Communism; for the East, he was insufficiently 'materialist'" (*Diaries*, Vol. I: xx, cited in Facundo Espino 2016: 384–85).

Klemperer essentially was a scholar of French literature. He published on Montesquieu (on whom he wrote his *habilitation*), modern French prose and poetry, and on the history of ideas before he was removed from his university position. In fact, he belonged to the generation of German Romance language and literature scholars Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht has celebrated in his *Vom Leben und Sterben der grossen Romanisten* (2002). The Ur-Vater of this tradition was Karl Vossler (1872–1949), who for most of his career taught at

the University of Munich. The other "great Romance scholars" Gumbrecht chronicles are Ernst Robert Curtius (1886–1956), Leo Spitzer (1887–1960), Erich Auerbach (1892–1957), and Werner Kraus (1900–76). Gumbrecht makes no specific mention of Klemperer, but it is Vossler who supervised Klemperer's *habilitation*. Of all German scholars mentioned (Spitzer in fact was Austrian, but taught in Germany), Spitzer and Auerbach are best known to Anglo-American scholars. When the Nazis removed them from their university professorships at Cologne and Marburg respectively, they went into exile and eventually ended up in the United States. Spitzer found a position at Johns Hopkins, and Auerbach, with a stop-over at Pennsylvania State University, at Yale. Their books and essays of the late 1940s and early 1950s were widely perceived as re-grounding the discipline of comparative literature in the United States. The main work of Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948), translated as *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1953), was usually mentioned in the same breath as Auerbach's *Mimemis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (1947), translated as *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1953), and the essays of Spitzer's collected in the latter's *Linguistics and Literary History* (1948). Unlike Auerbach and Spitzer, Curtius, who was not Jewish, was not forced into exile but throughout the Nazi years remained Professor of Romance Languages and Literature at the University of Bonn, after earlier passages in Marburg and Heidelberg. Unlike Auerbach and Spitzer again, Curtius does not figure in any significant way in the heated discussions about world literature that have been raging in American academia since the turn of the twenty-first century.

If Klemperer is mentioned at all it is with reference to his war diaries, as when Emily Apter in her essay "Saidian Humanism" (2004) cites a well-known passage in which Klemperer affirms that German language and culture gave him a far greater sense of belonging than his Jewish identity, regardless of what Nazi ideology as well as Zionism were telling him. She sees this as an example of the kind of secular humanism transcending any narrow form of nationalism, a form of humanism that Edward Said propounded, and which she sees as expressive of the worldview of an entire generation of interbellum literary scholars. In an earlier (2003) article on the "invention" of comparative literature in Istanbul, Apter again refers to Klemperer's war diaries as well as to the latter's volume on Nazi language.

The rest of Klemperer's scholarly output has been overlooked in Anglo-American and English-language scholarship. During the Nazi years, Klemperer forcibly remained silent, but after the war he resumed publication.

In 1956, still during his lifetime, there appeared a volume with the telling title *vor 33 / nach 45. Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Before 33 / After 45: Collected Essays). This contains an essay entitled "Weltliteratur und Europäische Literatur."[1] Again, this has been completely ignored in English-language scholarship. There is a Spanish translation (Klemperer 2010). What makes this essay especially interesting for the purpose of the present volume is that it nicely illustrates why each statement on world literature needs to be understood in its own period and geopolitical context. Of course, this is not a new insight. I have argued as much with respect to Richard Moulton's *World Literature and Its Place in General Culture* (1911), which openly flaunts its Anglo-American bias, but the same could be said of many such statements, including the most recent ones. I will come back to this at the end of my chapter.

Succinctly put, Klemperer in "Weltliteratur und europäische Literatur" is concerned with preserving the preeminence of European literature and culture in a world that has changed dramatically with World War I and its outcome – a war in which Klemperer himself had fought valiantly. He is equally keen on safeguarding a central place within European literature for German literature, along with French literature. To this end, he is not averse to harnessing Goethe's "world literature" as well as literary history. Klemperer leads off by quoting a stanza that Goethe wrote in 1827 to mark the then recent discovery of the so-called *Königinhofer Handschrift*, allegedly a collection of medieval Czech poetry. It was later proven to be a counterfeit. Goethe himself left the verse in question untitled. But written as it was during the same year in which Goethe first used the term *Weltliteratur* himself, some subsequent German scholarship tended to interpret it as expressing Goethe's ideas on the issue. For Klemperer, this is in error. Instead, he follows the turn-of-the-twentieth-century German literary historian Richard M. Meyer when the latter claims that the stanza in question would better have been titled "Volkspoesie." Klemperer argues that the stanza mentioned picks up on Goethe's early enthusiasm for vernacular poetry expressive of a people's native genius, but such Herderian "organic" poetry, though it enters into Goethe's reflections on *Weltliteratur*, is not to be identified with the latter.

The same thing goes for other ways of thinking about literature current in Goethe's time. Essential for an understanding of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, and what prompted him to coin the term, is that it refers to an absolutely novel view of literature.[2] And, Klemperer emphasizes, "to clearly define this

1 Originally published in 1929 in *Logos* 18, pp. 362–418.

2 Klemperer is wrong to attribute the coinage to Goethe, as recently it has come to light that others had used the term before Goethe, although the latter undeniably is

novelty is not just a matter for Goethe specialists. Rather it is something that has held the world in thrall for exactly a hundred years now, and that occupies it now and since the world war more than before."[3] The clue to what makes *Weltliteratur* such a new thing for Klemperer lies in a remark Goethe made to Willibald Alexis on August 12, 1829 and in which he talks of "a universal European or World Literature."[4] "By coining the term and the concept of world literature Goethe effectively pinpoints, is the first to discover, calls and thereby raises to general consciousness, what then emerges as European literature."[5] Klemperer thus explicitly equates European literature with world literature, and in what follows he seeks to unearth the ramifications the concept of a "transnational literature"[6] assumes before, with, and after Goethe and up till his own time.

Claiming equal rights for all literatures, Herder – so Klemperer's argument goes – introduced something completely new in European thought about literature. In antiquity, and throughout the Middle Ages, the most diverse peoples living in what eventually became the Roman empire, and later Christian Europe, were bound into a linguistic and literary cosmopolis through the hegemony, not to say monopoly, of Greek and Latin. When the first writings in the vernacular appear, they still function within a context determined by the classics and the Church. If the period of the Renaissance through the eighteenth century heralds a turn toward reason rather than authority, and hence toward greater freedom for the individual and toward the vernacular, from an aesthetic perspective, classical models and through them of a common measure in literature come to exert even greater influence. Real change became possible only when reason itself came under attack, and this is what Herder, building on Jean-Jacques Rousseau, accomplishes when he posits that the poetic instinct is common to all men and all peoples, and present in its purest form in the earliest manifestations of a people's genius. At the time, Herder is inspired by the Enlightenment ideal of Mankind as the ultimate horizon, where all peoples are on their

responsible for its popularization, and for the impact it has had on literature and literary studies since.

3 "dieses Neue klar zu bestimmen, ist nicht etwa ein goethephilologisches Spezialunternehmen. Vielmehr geht es um eine Sache, die jetzt aufs Datum genau ein Jahrhundert die Welt erfüllt, und die sie heute und seit dem Weltkrieg mehr als je zuvor beschäftigt" (Klemperer 1956: 29).

4 "eine allgemeine Europäische oder Weltliteratur" (29).

5 "Indem Goethe das Wort Weltliteratur und seinen Begriff Weltliteratur prägt, weist er tatsächlich auf das hin, spürt er als Erster, nennt es und hebt es dadurch ins allgemeine Bewusstsein, was dann als europäische Literatur fortwächst" (29).

6 "übernationale Literatur" (29).

way to a common "Völkergemeinschaft," and all would become world citizens. Not by coincidence Immanuel Kant, in the same period, was developing similar ideas in his "Ideas on universal history from a cosmopolitan perspective."[7] Following Rousseau and Herder, writers started to give free rein to feeling and nature in their verse, for the form of which they turned most often to what Klemperer calls "Dichtungsformen der Romania": early Provençal, Spanish, and Italian models as alternatives to the classics. Romanticism was born. Unique to German literature, Klemperer claims, is that, next to outpourings of feeling, this led to the massive trying out of models borrowed from the world's literatures, unhampered by native constraints. In France, on the contrary, any foreign import is finally, and swiftly, assimilated to the native genius.

The novelty of Goethe's concept of world literature for Klemperer is that, at the same time that he coins it, he restricts it to European literature, not defined geographically but in terms of striving to join an "ethical/aesthetic" model.[8] This is not, along the lines of the Enlightenment, to be interpreted as aiming at one common humanity, or even a common Europeanness. Goethe sees each people contributing to "world literature" according to its own nature, but only in so far as it enriches the ethical-aesthetic complex just mentioned. Klemperer sees the French comparatist Ferdinand Brunetière as picking up from Goethe when in a lecture at the Collège de France in 1900, later published as "La Littérature européenne" in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, he sketches the development of European literature as a succession of vernacular literatures, with that particular literature taking the temporary lead that best succeeds in combining its own inherent nature with the Greco-Roman and Christian roots common to all: Italian, Spanish, French, English, and finally German. Klemperer cites Brunetière: "In matters of literature I only consider European what has enriched the European spirit with some element that until then had remained 'national' or 'ethnic.'"[9] Klemperer sees the same principle obtaining for other literatures beyond the European canon. As a striking example he mentions Rabindranath Tagore, whose work, although unmistakably set in India, he sees as "riven with pure European elements!"[10] In fact, Klemperer claims, Tagore's 1912 play *The Post Office*, regardless of its setting, as far as its subject, its form, and its

7 "Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht."
8 "eine anzustrebende Übereinstimmung im 'Sittlich-Ästhetischen'" (40).
9 "Littérairement, je ne considère comme européen que ce qui a enrichi l'esprit européen de quelque élément demeuré jusqu'alors 'national' ou 'ethnique'" (43).
10 "mit rein europäischen Elementen durchsetzt!" (46).

ideas are concerned, could just as easily have been written by Maurice Maeterlinck. No wonder, then, that Klemperer posits that, "Effective world literature, the beginnings of which Goethe observed, and the development of which he predicted and wished for, was then indeed in – not a geographical, but a spiritual, ethical and aesthetic sense very thoroughly European. In world literature, other forms of human existence followed the European form."[11] Jumping to the early twenty-first century, it seems to me that – in a totally different context, and coming from a totally different direction, and with all differences obtaining – here we see intimations of Pascale Casanova and Franco Moretti.

The "European form" world literature takes for Klemperer at the turn of the twentieth century is determined by what he sees as the two leading literatures in Europe: French and German, and which he sees as mutually transforming themselves in each other's direction. French literature, while always continuing to consider itself as the guardian of a Europeanness built on Roman antiquity and a certain *latinitas*, with Joris-Karl Huysmans, Valery Larbaud, and Emile Verhaeren (the latter, of course, Belgian, and Flemish, but writing in French and therefore seen as representative for what goes on in at least part of French-language poetry), Klemperer sees as loosening its native preponderance for clarity and order, and hence moving nearer to the German tradition. In fact, he sees Verhaeren, precisely because he is Flemish but writes in French, as the typical embodiment of the reconciliation of the German and French elements in literature. With Stefan George, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Rainer Maria Rilke, he sees German literature as moving away from its Romantic tendency to formlessness.

World War I pitted the European powers against one another and effectively put an end to Europe's domination of the world. The United States on the one hand and Soviet Russia on the other asserted themselves as formidable rivals and successors to the European powers. Verhaeren, in 1906, in his poem "L'Europe" had portrayed the continent as "vibrant Europe, mistress of the world,"[12] a mastery exerted also by "the knowing fingers of its lyrical force."[13] After 1918 the days when Europe literally ruled the world are gone, but the old continent, Klemperer argues, remains "even now, in this long

11 "Die active Weltliteratur, deren Anfänge Goethe beobachtet, deren Entwicklung er vorausgesagt und gewünscht hatte, war also tatsächlich in – nicht geographische, sondern geistigem, sittlichen und ästhetischen Sinn sehr tiefreichend als europäisch anzusehen. Andere Formen menschliches Seins ordneten sich in ihr der europäischen Form ein" (47).

12 "l'Europe intense et maîtresse du monde."

13 "les doigts savants de sa force lyrique."

moment of bloody madness, the spiritual mistress of the world."[14] European literature as world literature plays an essential role in preserving this spiritual dominance. Given the intense political and military rivalry between France and Germany in the period leading up to World War I, it was all the more important that European literature also work toward a reconciliation between the two. This is what Klemperer himself aimed at with his early publications on then recent French literature, but he also mentions Ernst Robert Curtius's 1919 *Die literarische Wegbereiter des neuen Frankreich* in this regard. He even contends that in his 1921 *Maurice Barrès und die geistigen Grundlagen des französischen Nationalismus*, convinced that "Germany and France undeniably are the leading focal points of the Continent,"[15] and moved by what Klemperer sees as "the nostalgic desire to see the continent at peace,"[16] Curtius all too easily overlooks the staunchly nationalist and anti-German groundswell of at least part of French culture. But Klemperer perceives Carl Sternheim, with his 1919–20 novel *Europa*, and Thomas Mann, in his postwar essays, as devoted to a "universal European spirit"[17] in their recognition of a need for "humanist clarity and order."[18] This European spirit, Klemperer maintains, "at present finds its clearest expression in France."[19] Indeed, in postwar France, the European interest manifests itself as a drive to keep intact the borders of that *latinitas* already mentioned, and which Klemperer links to the definition of Europe Paul Valéry put forward in a speech he gave in Zürich. For Valéry, Europe is wherever "Rome" exerts its spiritual influence: as a form of government, as the disseminator of Hellenic beauty, and as Church. If anything, for Klemperer French "Europäismus" expresses itself as a desire to draw these borders even more clearly when it comes to new territories so as to better "latinize" them. Germany's "Europäismus," he says, "expresses itself even more determinedly than before the war as a seeking for shelter within the borders of latinitas."[20] Still, he warns, at some point immediately after the war it looked as if Germany, rejected by the West, might turn East, and somewhat later as if it might assume a mediatory role between the Russian and the French, the

14 "auch jetzt noch, im langen Augenblick der blutigen Geistesverwirrung, geistige Herrin der Erde" (52).
15 "Deutschland und Frankreich nun einmal die leidenden Brennpunkte des Kontinents sind" (54).
16 "die Sehnsucht den Kontinent in Frieden zu sehen" (54).
17 "allgemeine europäische Geistigkeit" (57).
18 "humanistische Klarheit und Ordnung" (57).
19 "in der Gegenwart ihren bedeutendsten Ausdruck in Frankreich" (57).
20 "drückt sich entschiedener noch als vor dem Kriege in Aufsuchen des lateinischen Grenzschutzes aus" (59).

Western and the Eastern spirit. Klemperer refers to the German author Bruno Frank's 1928 tale "Politische Novelle" (to be translated as either "Political Tale" or "A Tale of Politics") to clarify the state of Europe, and of European literature and culture at the time he himself is writing his essay. In Frank's tale, a German and a French minister try to reach an agreement at a hotel on the coast of the Mediterranean. Around them there is the noise of international conversations and jazz. They find one another in a defence of what is European:

> "Over and over again it is the Battle of Salamis that must be fought," they say to one another, and today the Persians are coming "from the West, with their insouciance and their money, and from the East as a monstrous wave of collective uniformity."[21]

If earlier some of Klemperer's remarks seemed like premonitions of some contemporary ideas on world literature, here I cannot help thinking of Klemperer's contemporary Erich Auerbach and his 1952 essay "Philology and Weltliteratur." In this essay Auerbach gives rein to his fear that with the outcome of World War II, which even more definitively sidelined Europe in contemporary world politics, language, culture, and literature might be homogenized according to either the model of the United States or that of the Soviet Union, the two main victors of that war. In the introduction to his last published book, *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter* (*Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*), Auerbach explicitly referred to philology as his tool for defending European civilization, a mission he saw as also that of his German Romance scholar contemporaries Vossler, Curtius, and Spitzer, men he pointedly called "*European* philologists" (Auerbach 1993: 6). The essays collected in his book, Auerbach writes,

> – like my work as a whole – spring from the same suppositions as theirs. My work, however, shows a much clearer awareness of the European crisis. At an early date, and from then on with increasing urgency, I ceased to look upon the European possibilities of Romance philology as mere possibilities and came to see them as a task specific to our time – a task which could not have been envisaged yesterday and will no longer be conceivable tomorrow. European civilization is approaching the term of its existence; its history as

21 "Es is immer wieder und immer noch einmal die Schlacht von Salamis, die geschlagen werden muss," sagen sie sich, und heute kommen die Perser "von Westen mit ihrer Unbekümmertheit und ihrem Gelt, sie kommen von Osten als ungeheure Woge kollektivistische Uniformität" (60).

> a distinct entity would seem to be at an end, for already it is beginning to be engulfed in another, more comprehensive unity. Today, however, European civilization is still a living reality within the range of our perception. Consequently – so it seemed to me when I wrote these articles and so I still believe – we must today attempt to form a lucid and coherent picture of this civilization and its unity. I have always tried, more and more resolutely as time went on, to work in this direction, at least in my approach to the subject matter of philology, namely literary expression. (1993: 6)

Interestingly, and fully supportive of Klemperer's overall argument and intention, in Frank's tale it is the German minister that holds most deeply to a Europe along Valérian lines, not his French counterpart. Just as Frank's characters think of Europe as essentially formed around France and Germany, so too for Klemperer, as for Curtius, the core of European literature and culture continues to be "Franco-German." To illustrate this, Klemperer turns to some other European literatures, showing how at heart some of their most famous representatives belong to either one of these two major traditions. Miguel de Unamuno, in *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* (1912, *Tragic Sense of Life*), protests that when self-appointed Europeans talk of Europe quite a lot seems to lie outside of it: Spain to begin with, but also England, Italy, Scandinavia, Russia. What remains, he says, and Klemperer cites the 1925 German translation of Unamuno's book, is "only Franco-Germany with its annexes and dependencies."[22] Instead, he claims a space for Spain in Europe, according to its own nature. Still, Klemperer argues, in Unamuno's most characteristic and best works, and especially in his "nívola" *Niebla* (1914, Mist), he basically works within the German tradition of Romantic irony and its experimentation with form/formlessness. He develops a similar argument with regard to Luigi Pirandello and his 1921 *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* (*Six Characters in Search of an Author*). Thus, Klemperer claims, two important Romance-language authors align themselves with the German literary tradition and spirit. James Joyce, an Irishman writing in English, he sees as "French at the core."[23] Of course, Klemperer admits that such a division of European literature between German and French camps only goes so far:

> Of course, Unamuno, Pirandello and Joyce can also throw things specific to their own language and their own nation in the scales – here we have to recall Brunetière again: otherwise they would not be European authors, they

22 "nur Franko-Germanien mit seinen Annexen und Dépendancen" (60)
23 "im Kern seines Wesens französich bestimmt" (64).

> would not make Europe richer. And of course, it is also wrong to literally limit Europe to "Franco-Germany." But what makes these otherwise so different men transcend their national character and makes them into Europeans is precisely their German and French elements, the commonality and fusion of which I demonstrated.[24]

All of this leads Klemperer to the conclusion that from the predominantly "French" cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment, the more recent appreciation of popular poetry in the vernacular inspired by German Enlightenment thinkers, and German Romanticism's incorporation of genres and models borrowed from all nations and ages, Goethe forged a concept of *Weltliteratur*

> in which the specific gifts of all nations started to come together, and the transnational and even world literary center of which consisted of the harmonious union of basic aesthetic and ethical ideas. It was the beginnings of this European world literature that Goethe observed, and which in the one hundred years since he coined the term has greatly expanded, with many branches and enriched by many peoples, but that in its very heartbeat, however one listens to it, remains demonstrably "Franco-German."[25]

Earlier I referred to Curtius, and to how his early post-World War I writings sought, in the words of Michael Kowal in his introduction to Curtius's *Essays on European Literature*, "to promote an exchange of ideas between French and German intellectuals that should eventually lead to a new unity of the European mind" (Curtius 1973: x). As Kowal recognizes, "To mediate between the literary consciousness of France and Germany was, for Curtius, not a theoretical proposition but a cultural program," and "because of the conjunction of circumstances [the recent World War], this program carried political implications" (Curtius 1973: x). Obviously, this is also much in

24 "Natürlich haben Unamuno, Pirandello und Joyce auch Eigensprachliches und Eigennationales in die Wage zu werfen – es ist wieder an Brunetière su erinnern: sie wären ja sonst keine europäischen Schriftsteller, sie brächten Europa keine Bereicherung. Und natürlich ist es also verkehrt, das geistige Europa buchstäblich auf "Franko-Germanien" zu beschränken. Aber dasjenige, was diese untereinander so verschiedenen Männer Uber ihr nationales Wesen hinausführt und europäisiert, ist doch eben das deutsche und französische Moment, dessen eigene Geteiltheit und Verschmolzenheit ich zeigte" (66).

25 "die sich an den dichterischen Sondergaben aller Nationen zusammenzufügen begann, und deren übernationaler und eben weltliterarischer Kern durch den Einklang ästhetischer und ethischer Grundvorstellungen gebildet wurde. Es war diese europäische Weltliteratur, deren Anfänge Goethe beobachte, und die sich in dem seit seiner Begriffsprägung verflossenen Jahrhundert mächtig ausbildete, vielfach gegliedert und von immer zahlreicheren Völkern bereichert, aber in ihrem Herzschlag, wo immer mann auch abhört, spürbar 'franko-germansich'" (67).

the spirit of Goethe when he remarks to the Congress of Natural Scientists in Berlin in 1828 that:

> In venturing to announce a European, in fact a universal, world literature, we did not mean merely to say that the different nations should get to know each other and each other's productions; for in this sense it has long since been in existence, is propagating itself, and is constantly being added to. No, indeed! The matter is rather this that the living, striving men of letters should learn to know each other, and through their own inclination and similarity of tastes, find the motive for corporate action.
>
> (D'haen, Domínguez, and Thomsen 2013: 13)

As Kowal notes, by the 1930s Curtius would become more concerned with reaffirming "the German intellectual inheritance without abandoning the commitment to a cosmopolitan ideal of culture" (Curtius 1973: xvi). This concern issued from the rise of Nazism, against which Curtius published *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr* (The German Spirit Endangered) in 1932. Like Klemperer, though in his case voluntary, Curtius withheld from publishing during the Nazi years. When he did re-emerge as a published scholar, it was with *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1948). The latter was quickly recognized as a classic on both sides of the Atlantic. The book elaborates upon what already in his 1932 pamphlet he had advocated as a remedy to the divisions plaguing Europe: a return to "the Latin unity of the Middle Ages and to the foundations of the Christian West" (Curtius 1973: xvii). Yet, like his post-World War I writings, this book, Curtius stresses, "is not the product of purely scholarly interests . . . it grew out of a concern for the preservation of Western culture" (viii) and "it grew out of vital urges and under the pressure of a concrete historical situation" (x).

In a recent article, Stephen Brockmann reminds us that Curtius was a powerful intellectual voice in the immediate post-World War II period in the German Federal Republic or West Germany, while Klemperer's was equally powerful in the GDR or East Germany (2015: 88). Faced with the undeniable mistrust of German culture abroad because of the horrors of Nazism, both Klemperer and Curtius advocated a return to that German culture they saw as impersonated in Goethe. Arvi Sepp, in a 2010 article, traces how, throughout the Nazi years, Goethe, along with Schiller and Lessing, served as an iconic figure of what German culture "really" stood for – both for Klemperer and for other Jewish intellectuals. Almost immediately after the war, Klemperer advocated that "Nazi inhumanity, which passed itself off as German humanity, should be countered with the pure

humanity of the Herder-Goethe era" (Klemperer 1946: 55, cited in Brockmann 2015: 79). But this return at the same time signals a return to that European tradition Klemperer, taking his cue from Goethe's "Europäische oder Weltliteratur," sees as identical with world literature, as we can learn from Curtius's "Fundamental Features of Goethe's World," published in 1949. Curtius pictures Goethe as "the final self-concentration of the western mind in a great individual" (1973: 90), and therefore as,

> something more // and something other than a German poet . . . he is solidary with the spiritual heritage of Europe. He stands in the line of Homer, Sophocles, Dante, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare. The consciousness of his place in this series is very much alive in him. His piety towards the "fathers," his alliance with the "dignified men" of old and with the chorus of spirits of the past, his conviction that there is a realm of the "Masters," with whom he feels he belongs – this most characteristic and remarkable trait of his form of mind acquires its deepest sense only now. This consciousness of solidarity through the millennia Shakespeare could not have had, Dante only within the Latin tradition. To Goethe it was given as a legitimation and corroboration of his mission. It is a sign, so to speak, from "the alphabet of the universal spirit." (Curtius 1973: 90–91)

Curtius concludes his essay with reminding us that Goethe on occasion described himself as an "epigone poet," and that in a letter to Creuzer in 1817 he wrote that epigone poets such as him "must revere the legacy of our ancestors" and "bow before these men whom the Holy Spirit has inspired and dare not ask, whence or wither." That attitude, Curtius says, "can today be the one that a 'small number' adopts towards Goethe" (1973: 91). Obviously, he counts himself among this "small number." His epigonism went further than mere reverence, though: he wanted to restore the tradition of the Master and reestablish the continuity of European culture. This is also how Hinrich C. Seeba, in a 2003 article, sees Curtius: as a post-WWII exponent of the return of world literature in the service of the unification of Europe. Seeing Curtius as the European counterpart to the "Americans" René Wellek, Leo Spitzer, and Erich Auerbach, Seeba argues that:

> The comparative analysis of the themes, motifs and structures of this world literature became the norm for a transatlantic school of literary hermeneutics that regardless of its self-declared ideological disinterest did not only serve to emphasize the immanence of literature: "The Europeanisation of the historical picture," Curtius declares in the introductory chapter of [*European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*], "has today become

> a political necessity, and not only for Germany." The aim was not only a new "world literature scholarship," but a new transnational world picture, that would make room in the European peace and unification process for the cultural tradition of the West threatened with extinction.[26]

What here pertains to Curtius could likewise be said of Klemperer, and although both these scholars, at least in English-language discussions of world literature, remain much less well known than their contemporaries Auerbach and Spitzer, with Klemperer even being almost completely unknown, their example shows how the term and concept of "world literature" may be put to strategic use in defense of a European, and a German, identity that is seen as under threat. Earlier I intimated that something comparable may be at work in more recent, and very different, interpretations of the same term and concept, inspired by different circumstances of space and time. In the little volume of mine to which I referred earlier, I tried to argue as much with respect to the recent revival of interest in world literature in the United States, seeing it as a strategy of US scholarship to come to terms with issues of multiculturality, postcolonialism, and the aftermath of 9/11, in a fast-changing and globalizing world where the hegemony of the United States is under threat. Likewise, the rising interest in world literature in China can be seen as an attempt to cope with the same processes of globalization looked at from a perspective almost diametrically opposed to that of the United States. In other words, "world literature" never is a neutral term or concept – it always serves some interest.

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26 "die vergleichende Analyse der Themen, Motive und Strukturen dieser Weltliteratur wurde zur Norm einer transatlantischen Schule der Werkinterpretation, die trotz ihres erklärten Ideologieverzichts nicht nur der literarische Immanenz im Auge hatte: 'Europäisierung des Geschichtsbildes,' so erklärt Curtius im einleitenden Kapittel seines Buchs, 'ist heute politische Erfordernis, und nicht nur für Deutschland.' Sie zielte nicht nur auf eine 'Weltliteraturwissenschaft,' sondern auf ein neues übernationales Weltbild, das die Kulturtradition des vom Untergang bedrohten Abendlandes in die europäischen Friedens- un Einigungsprozess einbringen sollte" (Seeba 2003: 532).

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13

Viśvasāhitya: Rabindranath Tagore's Idea of World Literature

ROSINKA CHAUDHURI

To see a World in a Grain of Sand

—*William Blake,* Auguries of Innocence *(1803)*

Speaking to an Indian (and, primarily, Bengali) audience in Calcutta, the capital of the British Empire in India in 1907, Rabindranath Tagore famously pronounced: "You have entrusted me with the responsibility to speak on what you in English call *Comparative Literature*. In Bengali, I will call it *viśvasāhitya*" (1961: 771). The term "Comparative Literature" is rendered in English – he uses the English words in his Bengali lecture – while the term *viśvasāhitya* is in Bengali. Commonly, in Bengali *viśva* means world or universe, and *sāhitya* means literature. Both words bear further reflection. For Rabindranath[1], *viśva* is an enormously significant category not because he was referred to as *viśva kavi* or world poet by the Bengali public (he became an international celebrity after he won the Nobel Prize in 1913), but because for him, as he said himself, the creative process itself was correlated to the immediacy of existence in the world. The category also comes up repeatedly in the talk itself, prefacing not just *sāhitya*, but also *mānab* or man, when he refers to *viśvamānab* in the context of *visvasāhitya*, as we shall see. Even more importantly, it is the category *sāhitya* that needs to be understood correctly in relation to its formulation in this chapter.

The word *sāhitya*, as Rabindranath knew it, and in part defined it, was one that was reformulated and reinvented in nineteenth-century India, torn from its original signification in Sanskrit etymology to mean what it means today in some Indian languages. Alongside other categories such as "*kavi*" [poet] or "*itihas*" [history], the nineteenth-century world formulated its understanding of *sāhitya* anew. Thus in 1885, Bankimchandra Chatterjee, the most famous writer of the age, asked, in an introduction to the poetry of his predecessor Iswar Gupta (1812–59), "Who is a *kabi*?" answering that Iswar Gupta was not

1 The writer is referred to by his first name in this essay following Bengali literary convention.

a *kabi* (*kavi* in Sanskrit and the Devnagari script, derived from *kāvya*) in the modern sense of the term, that is – and here Bankim uses the English word – Iswar Gupta was not a *poet*. Discussing the disjunction between the old and new senses of the word *kabi*, Bankim notes that in ancient times, in the *śāstra*s, any man of knowledge was referred to as *kabi*, whether he was writing about theosophy or astrology. The meaning of the term has changed over time, he says, and at the start of the nineteenth century in Bengal, it meant composers in singer-songwriter teams confronting each other in the contest known as *kabir larāi*. Now, however, continues Bankim, "*kabi* means *poet*, although there's a great deal of confusion about 'the poetic' [*kabitva*]. The 'poetic' is that which in English is called *Poetry*. This is the common usage, so we are compelled to judge whether or not Iswar Gupta is a poet in this sense."[2] The category *sāhitya* also underwent a similar transmutation at this time, as did the word "Literature" in the Western world. It is in the new reformulated sense of literary writing that Rabindranath uses the word, unfixed from its etymological roots in the Sanskrit high tradition and redrafted into something usable in contemporary "common usage," as Bankim put it. The idea of "World literature" was born in such writings from the 1850s onward. This shift paralleled the rise of the term "Literature" in the French as well as other contexts. Roland Barthes marks the moment of the birth of "Literature" in these words: "as soon as the writer ceased to be a witness to the universal, to become the incarnation of a tragic awareness (around 1850), his first gesture was to choose the commitment of his form, either by adopting or rejecting the writing of his past" ([1953] 1968: 3).

Viśvasāhitya was presented at the National Council of Education in Calcutta on February 9, 1907, when Rabindranath Tagore was forty-six years old and an established poet in the Bengali literary sphere, although still unknown to the world (Tagore 1961: 762–73). It was subsequently published in the revived journal *Bangadarśan* that Tagore was editing at the time with Srishchandra Majumdar. *Bangadarśan* was a literary journal of immense import in the history of Bengali literature. It should bear pointing out that in 1907, the year his lecture was delivered, Rabindranath's beloved younger son, eleven-year-old Samindranath, died of cholera later in the year following the deaths of his wife, a daughter, and father in the preceding few years. This middle period before world fame, was, as his biographers note, a significant time of reflection and writing for the poet.

2 For a detailed discussion see Chaudhuri 2013.

Rabindranath Tagore's essay *Viśvasāhitya* or "World Literature" could be read as a foundational text that argues for an idea of world literature that, if read in relation to his philosophy, can be seen to challenge Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur*. This essay on world literature is important not only because of the political and historical circumstances of its production, but because it advocates for a method of doing world literature that potentially frees us from the conundrum besetting the methods used so far. In contrast to Goethe's, the idea of "the world" that Tagore conceives in this essay is a philosophical notion related to an understanding of the "self" and the "other" which is predicated upon his inheritance of, and interest in, both Upanishadic high theory and popular folk culture. In saying this, I do not intend to posit an opposition between Goethe and Tagore, and rehearse a familiar West versus East narrative. As any nuanced reading of either Goethe or Tagore will show, their positions were not diametrically opposed. Rabindranath was an admirer, and had read Goethe and referred to him in the letters he wrote from his houseboat as a young man. He referenced Goethe repeatedly in 1894 and 1895, sometimes quoting from him, asking, on one occasion (in an analysis that has implications for his formulation of *viśvamānab* as well as *viśvasāhitya*, as we shall see): "Are you enjoying Goethe's biography? You will have noticed one thing – that although Goethe was in some respects a very detached personality, still, he had a connection with men, he was absorbed in man."[3] Reflecting on the relative status of his own position, he writes in another: "Last evening I was reading an essay on Goethe by Dowden – there I saw that Goethe had left everything behind to go and spend two years in Italy in order to immerse himself in art . . . I think – if I had the good fortune of Goethe, if I hadn't been born in Bengal, if there were appropriate food for the soul to be found here, then I would have attained immortality in the entire world – at present I am largely an object of pity, and poor. If I can, I too shall set out into this world at some point – that's what I really desire."[4] Set out into the world he did and, in the process, reformulated again for himself and others ideas about the world, of man, and of literature that had animated his thoughts from the start.

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Several overlaps exist between two recent interpreters of the Tagore essay: David Damrosch anthologizes it in *World Literature in Theory* and discusses it

3 Letter No. 143, Shilaidaha, August 12, 1894, in Tagore 2014: 261.
4 Letter No. 242, Patishar, November 25, 1895, in Tagore 2014: 386–87.

briefly in the introduction (2014a), while Bhavya Tiwari offers an extensive essay in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* (2012). The brevity of Damrosch's comments on Tagore's essay stands in contrast to the many paragraphs he devotes to Goethe's "seminal reflections on *Weltliteratur* in his conversations with Johann Peter Eckermann in the late 1820s" in this introduction (2014a: 5). His discussion of the Goethe–Eckermann conversations is even more detailed and exhaustive in his book *What Is World Literature* (2003) where his commentary runs into many pages. Of Tagore, however, in the context of his inclusion in the anthology above, Damrosch offers a couple of paragraphs:

> Ideas of world literature spread far beyond Europe in the early decades of the twentieth century. "Origins" concludes with two path-breaking statements on world literature from two very different locations. In his 1907 essay on vishwasahitya or "world literature," Rabindranath Tagore speaks of the universal values that world literature can embody – an argument that served a strategic local purpose of its own, offering a counter to England's strategy of ruling its colonial possessions in India by dividing and conquering.
>
> (2003: 6)

To start with, the sentence construction of the first line – ideas shown spreading out from Europe to far beyond it – gestures incipiently toward the "first in the West and then in the rest" model which, once we actually begin to investigate the growth and interaction of literatures, surely has only a limited use, as Damrosch himself might be the first to concede. Neither should one read instrumentality into the strategic insertion of a text from India and one from China at the "Origins" of *World Literature in Theory*. Instead, focusing on his comments on the significance of the essay, we see he touches two familiar bases: (1) Tagore "speaks of the universal values that world literature can embody," and (2) Tagore's argument is a "counter to England's strategy" of divide and rule. The second comment, which Damrosch does not explain, is puzzling until understood in relation to Tiwari's discussion of Viceroy Curzon's plan to divide Bengal in 1905 and her foregrounding of the nationalist politics of the forum for Tagore's talk – the National Council of Education. While the political may never be far from a colonial writer's preoccupations, it seems fair to posit that writers were not always responding politically or nationalistically when thinking about the function of literature. In fact, Tagore declares emphatically in the last essay he published that, as a creative writer, he had no truck with history – "tied to no public by history" – as we shall see below. The second point about

"universal value"' is commonly made in relation to Tagore. It was also an accusation made by modernist poets such as Pound and Buddhadeva Bose against his poetry. Tiwari too refers to Tagore's universalism, speaking of his "supranational universality" (2012: 44) and of how the poet "under the nomenclature of 'vishwasahitya' advocated universality" (43).

On what the essay actually says, neither scholar says very much. Tiwari takes "a quick glance" at the essay itself, a glance that does not encompass a single Bengali word.[5] She maintains that Tagore's universalism is "significantly modulated" in this essay because "Tagore is countering this policy [of dividing Bengal] by using ecological metaphors of earth and land, emphasizing the organic connectedness that exists beyond geographical or religious or linguistic boundaries when it comes to literatures and other art forms" (44). Analyzing the etymological roots of *Sahitya* in Sanskrit, where it "does not have the same resonance as the word 'literature' in English," she returns to Bharata's *Nāṭya Śāstra* (whose first complete compilation is dated to between 200 BCE and 200 CE) to explain Rabindranath's understanding of the word. But to refer to the Sanskrit and claim that the essence of the term *sāhitya* is to be found in its etymological sense of "togetherness" and "union" is to miss the point somewhat, as the word obviously means something else to both the speaker and his audience in 1907. Tiwari is quite right, however, to say that "many world literary traditions are in fact at work in India, and as a result there cannot be one comparative literature or even one world literature." She yokes Goethe and Tagore together to coin her own model for India, "Comparative World Literature," but Tagore's essay does not seem to be making quite that point (45). Both interpreters seem to assume that the *Gitanjali* in English was translated from a single Bengali text ("when he was moved . . . to translate his major poem cycle *Gitanjali* into English" – Tiwari 2012: 42). Damrosch concludes his brief comments on the essay with: "Tagore's universalism had an outward as well as inward-looking use; a few years after delivering his lecture, Tagore undertook the step of translating his book-length poem *Gitanjanli* into English, a self-translation that led to his becoming the first Asian winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913" (44).

As much as the poet might have abhorred the idea of these translations from a few scattered and slim volumes of his Bengali poetry (not, as he says, one "book-length poem") having what Damrosch calls an "outward use,"

5 Every reference to the text of Rabindranath's essay here is from quotations translated by Buddhadeva Bose in his essay "Comparative Literature in India" (1959). There is no reference to the Bengali essay itself or any other Bengali-language work here.

how exactly this was an outcome of "his universalism" remains unclear. Damrosch's mention of Tagore's Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 alludes to the inevitable worldwide circulation of the prizewinning text, thus fitting into his theoretical paradigm of what makes world literature, but Rabindranath himself might not have valorized the outward uses of poetry in quite the same way. He wrote repeatedly of the history of chance and misdirection and the role of the unconscious, both in the form these translations took and in their physical journey to fame (he lost the notebook with the translations on the London Underground). Like much else in the critical corpus on his work, Rabindranath shaped the narrative that told the story of *Gitanjali*'s success from the start, reiterating again and again the accidental nature of its journey to fame. "You have written to me about my English translations of *Gitanjali*. How I wrote them and why people liked them so much I still cannot quite comprehend," he wrote to his niece in an often-quoted letter from London in 1913 (Tagore 1993: 19–20). This feeling of abnegation with regard to the act of creation or composition recurs in his letters. So he writes in a letter of 1894 of his Bengali poems: "in fact, when I read my own poetry I don't feel as if I've written it – almost as if I write good poems by accident, not because I want to" (Letter 166, in Tagore 2014: 297). Of his lectures in English in America in 1913, too, he said much the same thing, that they were happenstance, or accidental (*ogulo daibāth lekhā hoye geche*), and we realize then that the feeling of being once removed from the worldly success of any creative act – its outward use – was germane to his thinking (Tagore 1993). One must therefore be wary of his own interpretations of his accomplishments, which in themselves reveal a creative prowess remarkable for their intelligence and acuity, and were hardly the result, as was once claimed for the British Empire, of having been built entirely by accident (R. Chaudhuri 2016).

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Rabindranath begins his essay *Viśvasāhitya* with three short sentences: "All our faculties of heart and mind are there only for contact with others. This contact is what makes us true, what enables us to find the truth. Otherwise, 'I am' or 'something is,' makes no sense at all"[6] (Tagore 1907: 762). The Bengali word *yog* or the Sanskrit *yoga*, which I have rendered as contact in this instance,

6 This and all the following translations from Tagore's Bengali are my own.

may be used differently in different contexts, and the standard *Sahitya Samsad* Bengali–English dictionary lists union, mixture, blending, relation, connection, association, contact, cooperation, concert, and act of joining.[7] This sense of "contact with others" or *yog* – the act of joining – is understood by Rabindranath in metaphors used throughout the essay to illustrate his thinking. He ends the essay too with this sense of connectedness, of totality, and of interrelationships – all derived from the word *yog*. Three things, he continues, connect us to the world: first, *buddhir yog*, the intellect, which is steeped in the power of knowledge; second, *prayojaner yog* or self-interest – imbued with use-value; and third, *ānander yog*, or "joy," where we truly experience our self.[8] It is in the first couple of pages that Rabindranath lays out the relationship we have with the world through *ānanda*, which, for him, comprises the only true relationship we can have with it.

The Upanishadic significance of *ānanda* was central to Rabindranath's philosophy and also key to his father Debendranath's spiritual explorations. Searching through the Upanishads for words that were "both ancient and in use, simple and easy to understand" in 1844, Debendranath found two phrases: *satyam jnānmanantam brahma* and *ānandarupamritam jadvibhāti* as suitable *sloka*s (lines/verses) to begin prayers with at the reformist Brahmo Samaj he headed at the time (Tagore [1907] 1961: 49). The first phrase's approximate meaning might be that reality [*Brahman*] is pure existence [*satyam*], consciousness [*jnānam*], and infinite [*ānandam* or *anantam*], while the latter phrase, which was later sculpted in iron letters in an arc over the gate to his house at Santiniketan, means "That which is particularly expressed in the nectar [*amritam*] of joy [*ānanda*]."[9] Debendranath's modern interpretation of these ancient lines was part of his mission to fashion a new religious idiom, a quest that could be said in spirit to be like Rabindranath's own use of a line from the Vedanta in his *Viśvasāhitya*. Both uses of the ancient texts (and such appropriation can be shown on many occasions) are accomplished entirely each "in his own way, unfettered by textbook Vedantism" (Guha 2003: 85). This principle of creative appropriation applies to the philosophical

7 Swapan Chakravorty in the Oxford Tagore Translations series, collected by David Damrosch for *World Literature in Theory* (2014b), translated *yog* as "forging bonds" here.

8 It is important to note the "speed bump" of untranslatability here – joy is too much on the surface to capture the spiritual resonance of *ānanda*, but it will have to suffice – bliss or delight, pleasure or happiness all have different connotations in the English language.

9 "The Vedas declare that reality (Brahman) is pure Existence (Sat or Satyam), Consciousness (Cit or Jnaanam) and Infinite (Aananda or Anantam)." http://practicalphilosophy.in/2014/11/23/satyam-jnaanam-anantam-brahma/.

significance of *ānanda* as well, and the only relevance returning to the roots of the word in the Upanishads would have for us is to see how Rabindranath turned it into something new as a philosophical tenet underpinning his notion of literature and existence in the world. Time and again in his songs, poems, and criticism, Rabindranath has reiterated the importance of *ānanda*. The word comes up repeatedly in songs, sometimes simply, as in *āj kī ānanda ākāśe bātāse* (what joy today in the sky and the breeze) and sometimes philosophically, as in *jagate ānandayogye āmār nimantran* (I have been invited to the world to join in the festival of joy).

Rabindranath's understanding of *ānanda* can be found in the way he formulated the relation of the self and the other. This *yog* or connection of *ānanda* with the world is one where all differences cease to exist (*samasta pārthakya ghuciyā yāy*) – there we do not feel the power of the intellect or of work, there we experience (*anubhab kari*) only ourselves. "What is this thing – the connection with *ānanda*?" – he asks in colloquial, nonliterary everyday language (*ei ānander yog byapārkhānā kī?*) (Tagore [1907] 1961: 763).[10] His answer is: "It is when we know the other as our self and know our self as other."[11] These are the unacknowledged words of Chandidas, the medieval Bengali poet whose lines – "I have made others my own people, and my own people others" – Peter McDonald has quoted in *Artefacts of Writing* in reference to Tagore's interest in the wandering singer-mendicants constituent of Baul folk culture. These sentiments exemplify the intercultural ideals behind his university, Visva-Bharati, no less than the philosophy animating *Viśvasāhitya* (McDonald 2017). The words in the Chandidas song in Bengali are:

Ghar kainu bāhir
Bāhir kainu ghar
Par kainu āpan
Āpan kainu par

The translation by Jeanne Openshaw adds "people" in the English; but this term does not exist in the original. A more literal translation would read: "My home I have made outside / The outside I have made my home / Others I have made my own / My own I have made other." There is no inner and

10 The *calit bhāshā* or spoken-language form that Rabindranath uses in this essay is also a remarkable innovation in 1907 because Bengali literature had till then been written in a formal literary language or *sādhu bhāshā* ; he faced severe criticism for this break from convention at the time.

11 In the Chakravorty translation: "It is nothing but knowing others as our own and our selves as other" (139).

outer, the medieval poet sang, no self and other. As Rabindranath paraphrased it a little later again in *Viśvasāhitya*: "In this way [in order to express itself], the heart is constantly at pains to find the world in our self and our self in the world" ([1907] 1961: 767).

The preoccupations inherent in *Viśvasāhitya* are emblematic of Rabindranath's thinking and exist in a thread with earlier and later works without which it is not possible to understand this essay. One such thread that may be traced between his thoughts here and those to be found expressed in the last essay he wrote, *Sāhitye Aitihāsikatā* ("Historicality in Literature"), a few months before he died in 1941 is that of a quotation he uses from the Brihadāryanaka Upanishad. About thirty-four years separate the two essays, but the line speaks to him at the end of his life as it did in relation to world literature when he (mis)quoted it from memory in *Viśvasāhitya* as: *navā are putrāsya kāmāya putrāh priyā bhavati* ([1907] 1961: 763). Ranajit Guha's discussion of these lines, which in *History at the Limits of World History* (2002) he translates as "It is not for the sake of the sons, my dear, that they are loved, but for one's own sake that they are loved," notes that these lines were mentioned by Rabindranath at least six times in his life in readings that "are all at variance with one another" (83).[12] As in *Viśvasāhitya*, in *Sāhitye Aitihāsikatā* too, however, this line acts as "a metaphor on creativity for Tagore when he returned to the text for the last time"[13] (86). For Rabindranath at eighty, these lines "had summed up the experience of that long encounter with destiny as he wrote, 'I am a poet of the world' (*ami prithibir kobi*)" (80).

It is as a metaphor for creativity – "The ātmā . . . wishes to manifest itself as the creator in its love for its son. That is why it values its love for the son so much" (86) – that Rabindranath uses the lines in *Viśvasāhitya* as well. Following the unacknowledged line from Chandidas, these lines urge us to elaborate on the notion of the self and the other. In *Viśvasāhitya*, he glosses the four lines he quotes, saying: "Yagnavalkya had said to Gargi: It is not for the sake of the sons that they are loved, but for the sake of the self [*ātman*] that they are loved / It is not for the sake of wealth that wealth is loved, it is for one's own sake." "What this means," he continues, is: "I want that within which I find myself most completely. My son dispels my need, this means, in my son I find myself even more. It is as if in him I become even more myself

12 In Guha, the line is rendered: "navā are putrā nāmkāmā ya putrāhpriyā bhavanti, ātmanastukāmāyaputrāh priyā bhavanti."

13 All quotes from Tagore's essay *Sāhitye Aitihāsikatā* are from Guha's translation in the appendix of *History at the Limit of World-History* (2002: 95–99).

(*āmi jena āmitara hayiyā uthi*)"(577).[14] Guha cites the philosopher Surendranath Dasgupta who suggested that in this Upanishad "the idea of the self moves to the center of intellectual and spiritual interest displacing the notion of an external creator." But Guha additionally sees that Rabindranath "severs it from its narrative background," revising it and freeing it for a new interpretation where, resisting any suggestion of self-realization, or any understanding of the *ātman* as Self with a capital "s," the self is rather "understood primarily as a sovereign creative agent" (Guha 2002: 86).

Rabindranath proposes in this essay that man expresses himself in the world broadly in two streams – in work, and in literature (this latter sometimes seems a metaphor for "play" and is used interchangeably with it). Society, state, religion, and sect have been built by the first; but where we are alone, without relations, without connections – where we are "uncivilized," in the sense of being free, we are in the realm of literature. In relation to literature, the words Rabindranath uses are *asabhya* (uncivilized), *prayajanke chāpāiyā* (evoking overflow, "in excess of necessity"), *anābaśyak* (without use or purpose), and finally, the untranslatable *deule* or "bankrupt." The dictionary defines the noun form *deuliya* as "bank insolvent; beggared." Rabindranath inverts the conventional meaning to imply the highest state of renunciation: the unattached / without possessions / beyond the worldly.

Numerous examples and metaphors are furnished by Tagore in this essay to illustrate what literature means so that we can grasp the significance of his claim that literature exists in a domain "without self-interest" (*svārtha sekhān haite dūre*). Parallel to the world of necessity (*prayajaner sansār*), man creates a world of literature (*sāhityer sansār*), which is superfluous, unnecessary (*prayajan chārā*). The notion of excess returns: he points out that "beauty is extravagance, it is excessive and wasteful expenditure" (*behisābi bāje kharac* – two adjectives here precede the verb *kharac* or spending, as if one will not suffice), it "exceeds need," it flowers without use and flows without purpose. Nature (Tagore's analogy here for writing) is large because it is full of the unnecessary. "What is expressed in literature?" he asks, and answers directly: "We find man's plenty (*prācurya*), his wealth (*aisharya*), that which overflows all his need. It has that which does not finish within the boundaries of his world" ([1907] 1961: 769). This preoccupation with the superfluous goes back at least to 1894, to Rabindranath's essay on children's nursery rhymes, where

14 The words he uses seem to evoke what Lawrence said about Cézanne in relation to the idea of surplus in Art: "But I am convinced that what Cézanne himself wanted *was* representation. He *wanted* true-to-life representation. Only he wanted it *more* true to life" (1998).

too words such as *anābaśyak* are used repeatedly, and the celebration of the arbitrary and the unfinished, the superfluous and the purposeless provide "a sort of space," a reconfiguration of emptiness, or a crack, "a gap in the everyday realm of valuation"(Chaudhuri 2008: 22–27).

In a conversation with David Damrosch, Gayatri Spivak identifies this notion of excess – the "peculiar idea" of *bāje kharac* – as one of the two "transgressive moments" in this piece "worth looking at"; the other is "the intimations of singularity, to which I cannot pay attention here" (Damrosch and Spivak 2011: 455–85). This repeated and "powerful metaphor" of "wasteful spending," she says, stands for "what in the imagination goes above, beyond, beneath, and short of mere rational choice toward alterity," unconsciously repeating Lawrence's famous passage on the workings of the imagination in Cézanne: "For the intuitive apperception of the apple is so *tangibly* aware of the apple that it is aware of it *all round*, not only just of the front . . . The true imagination is forever curving round to the other side, to the back of the presented appearance" (Lawrence [1929] 1998: 278). "The uncertain intimacy open to ethical alterity is 'wasteful,"' Spivak continues, for he "defines that worldliness beyond, beneath, above, and short of not only merely rational choice but also the verbal text" (Damrosch and Spivak 2011: 472). Conceding that "this lesson is hard to learn," "this message of Tagore – that what goes across is not immediately profitable or evaluable . . . that it is 'value-added' in an incommensurable sense with no guarantees," Spivak misses the significance of the term preceding *bāje kharac* that could support her argument even further. This term is *behisābi* – a word that means wasteful but also evokes the accounts book, *hisāb* meaning calculation, counting, or accounting – so *behisābi* is that which does not "add up," that which is beyond calculation (472). This meaning of world literature (*Viśvasāhitya*) is particularly hard to grasp because it does not subscribe to the predominant metaphor of commerce, circulation in the world, or world-systems that underpins much of the thinking on world literature. Neither can it be understood by incrementally adding to the corpus: learning more languages, undertaking more collaborative work, or subscribing to an overdose of pluralism.

Tagore's *Viśvasāhitya* is remarkable not just for the vision it holds of world literature – as something excessive and beyond the realm of calculation – but also because of the light it might shed in relation to reading/doing world literature today. The kernel of Rabindranath's thought in *Viśvasāhitya* is contained in a few paragraphs toward the end of the essay, where he finally arrives at the crux of the matter: "Now it is time to come to the point, which is: if we reduce literature to time-place-thing [*deś-kāl-pātra*], we do not

properly comprehend it" ([1907] 1961: 771).[15] Rabindranath suggests an alternative approach: "We will find what we need to see in literature when we understand that literature allows man-in-the-world [*viśvamānab*] to express himself" (771). Again, the word *viśvamānab* might be translated conventionally as universal man, but as Tagore seems to be gesturing at man's existence or being in the world, I have used man-in-the-world instead.[16]

The writer, apparently, must express the feeling and sorrow of all mankind for his writing to assume the status of literature. Arguably, this is the only universalist sentiment in the entire essay. But the statement is immediately qualified – "But – only if . . ." Once more, we encounter an extended metaphor – "But only if we see that *viśvamānab* constructs literature as a temple – but the entire structure is always under construction, without a *plan*" (he uses the English word). He has been called here (to the National Council of Education), he says, to talk about what in English is called comparative literature, but which he shall call, in Bengali, *viśvasāhitya*, literally, world literature, but if understood in conjunction with *viśvamānab*, then literature-in-the-world. Returning to the thought that the socio-political-historical content or context of literature is not literature, Rabindranath continues that Akbar's rule, Gujarat's history, Elizabeth's character is "mere information," "just the pretext" – these are merely the devices one may use. "When man expresses himself as man-in-the-world [*viśvamānab*], when he breaks and builds and breaks himself again in order to experience his self individually and collectively – that person tries to show us not individual people, but everyday man in his everyday efforts and desires" (771).[17] In *Sāhitye Aitihāsikatā* Rabindranath said much the same thing, identifying his writing as emptied of history: "Like the Supreme Creator, he [the poet], too, creates his work out of his own self . . . Thanks to his [the poet's] creativity, what came to be reflected in *Galpaguchha* was not the image of a feudal order nor indeed any political order at all, but that history of the weal and woe of human life which, with its everyday contentment and misery, has always been there."[18] It is the same circuit between inner and outer, self and other, man and the world that is being gestured at here: the individual and the

15 The word *pātra* can mean self or object – colloquially it means vessel or pot – in this sentence ('*sāhityake deś-kāl-pātre choto kariyā dekhile thikmata dekhāi haẏ nā*') it refers to the context of literature and would therefore be translated as object or thing.

16 Supriya Chaudhuri translates *viśvamānab* as "universal humanity," which misses the grain of Rabindranath's thought here. See S. Chaudhuri 2016: 82–83.

17 This too is phraseology repeated in *Sāhitye Aitihāsikatā* at the end of his life.

18 For a detailed discussion, see Chaudhuri 2012: 175–201.

collective exist in relation to one another – true creativity will grasp at the universal only through the particular which again circles round to be found to exist in everyday man or man-in-the-world.

Finally, we come to what is worth looking at in world literature: "to see how man expresses his *ānanda* in literature, and which everyday form [*nityarūp*] man's self wants to show in the different forms [*bicitra mūrti*] this expressivity takes." And again: "We must not interpret it as *a constructed composition*; *it is a world*" (*ihāke krittim racanā baliyā jānile haibenā; ihā ekti jagat*) (emphasis added). World literature, then, is not the sum of literatures in the world; rather, *literature is a world*. So here, finally, we have it, world literature turned on its head: it is not literature *in* and *of* the world, "It is *a* world" – it is to be found within the self that expresses itself, therefore it is within the self and so in the world, arguing, as Spivak puts it, "for a wordliness in the literary" (Damrosch and Spivak 2011: 472). Further, it is a world always under construction, always unfinished, always striving for completion. Like (Rabindranath suggests) the *mandala* of the sun, the trembling light surrounding the part fluid, part solid inner sun, literature is an "intangible emanation made of words" surrounding man, spreading around him, and connecting with him: "the second world all around the world of man – *that* is literature" ([1907] 1961: 772) As Peter McDonald put it in his reading of the essay, "Crucially, for Tagore, 'the world' in this context is neither a geographical space nor a determinate set of universal values: it is an aspiration toward an ever greater understanding of and feeling for interconnectedness which, like the creative potential of literature, is always in the making, never complete" (2017: 30).

This is different from, if not contrary to, Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, a term, Damrosch says, Goethe "popularized while reading a Chinese novel in a week when he was also reading Persian and Serbian poetry, all in French or German translations, together with poems by Pierre Jean de Béranger in the original" (2014a: 4). Goethe's world literature is established in the context of his voracious reading in "a surprisingly wide range of foreign literatures"; through Goethe's conversations with Eckermann, Damrosch says, "we gain a nuanced picture of [his] manifold encounters with foreign texts" (2003: 4). Such a contextualization places Goethe's notion of world literature firmly *in* the world and of it; transcending boundaries and nations, encountering "foreign texts," but circulating within the world. "World Literature is the blue-chip moniker," Apter says, "benefitting from its pedigreed association with Goethean *Weltliteratur*" (2013: 41).

What prevents us from engaging with Rabindranath's idea instead? Perhaps Tagore isn't blue chip enough. Spivak asks directly: "Why should

we endlessly quote Goethe? A magisterial writer but historically undoubtedly informed by that imperialist anti-imperialism which I already cited as the Bloomsbury Fraction" (Damrosch and Spivak 2011: 472). What Spivak identifies in Tagore's essay as "the singularity of literary production" is read by her in relation to Genet's question about the essence of art – "What remains of a Rembrandt, torn into four equal pieces and flushed down the toilet?" The four pieces for her in this context are: "the politics of identity, voting blocks, Melissa Williams's view of multiculturalism, systemic grids, competing cultures," and they belong to Goethe's vision of literature *in* the world and *of* it, against Rabindranath's "ethics of alterity" in which "we can imagine the other . . . as singular, universalizable, but never universal" (Damrosch and Spivak 2011: 468). "Universalizable but never universal" – this rethinking is hard.

Rabindranath crucially ends his essay by reminding his audience that world literature is *not* an addition of parts:

> All I wanted to say is that just as the world is not my farm (*khet*) and your farm and someone else's farm, so too literature is not my writing, your writing and someone else's writing – that is a very provincial way of knowing the world – ordinarily, we view literature in this provincial way.
>
> ([1907] 1961: 773)

He does not add here that this provincialism emanates from the West, although he has said that on other occasions; his criticism of "Western civilization" runs into many pages. What he asks for, rather, is to "free ourselves of this narrow provincialism" and aim to "see the world of man (*viśvamānab*) in the world of literature (*viśvasāhitya*)." Supriya Chaudhuri, in her reading of the essay, is quite right to say that he focuses here "wholly upon the nature of literature itself," putting forward an ideology that "converts a question about literature of the world to an assertion of the 'worlding' of the self through literature" (2016: 82–83).

In conclusion, Rabindranath suggests that this way of seeing world literature would involve seeing in *each* writer's work an "accumulation," a "convergence" or "coming-together" *('samagratā')*. It would also mean finding in that convergence connections with the creative expressions of every man; he emphasizes the particular in the whole and then the need to connect the particular to each other. This is not a universalist statement, despite the notions of convergence and relations between all men in this part of the sentence; it is, rather, what Spivak usefully calls "singularity in a collectivity," where singularity' doesn't necessarily imply single texts, but

"simply implies that what is singular in any text is the universalizable" (Damrosch and Spivak 2011: 478). Earlier, reacting against "systemic grids," Spivak had defined the "ethics of alterity" as that which "imagine[s] the other . . . as singular, universalizable, but never universal" (468), offering an antidote to formulations such as "singular universals" or familiar claims such as that, for Tagore, literature "serves to express universal humanity" (S. Chaudhuri 2016: 81). Placing Tagore alongside Rembrandt and Bach, Spivak repeats that we need to speak for them as "universalizable but never universal" – that is, the problem and delight of confronting literature or art as *a* world, rather than *of* it as manifested in the attempt to flatten the world into a grid. "Literature *of* the world" (thinking of world literature in terms of contexts and circulation) is rejected in favor of an understanding of "literature *as* the world" (as something to be found in the particular or the part in relation to the world). This overturning of how we do literature in the world – that is, the problem and delight of confronting literature as *a* world, rather than *of* it – is the fundamental contribution made by Rabindranath to the debate on world literature.

This notion of world literature being irreducible to time-place-thing (*deś-kāl-pātra*) is exactly what is conventionally *not* present in studies of world literature today. Much of the work in this genre is historicist in nature, including that of Mufti and Bhattacharya, who have questioned the cartography and history of the origins of thinking on world literature, bringing William Jones and the colonial project into the picture, arguing that it was not Europe that was the location of the beginnings of world literature but India. Pheng Cheah, on the other hand, does discuss the temporal dimension that is integral to the understanding of *Weltliteratur,* pointing out that Auerbach had stressed the point that the humanism of Goethe's concept is "historicist," it is related to "the past and to the future," to world history. "The universal history of the human spirit" is facilitated by a "vision of the achievements of the human species organised into a narrative of universal progress" – it is this historicism that underlies the flattening of the world into grids (Cheah 2016: 24–25). Most approaches to world literature inevitably map worlds or track, as Damrosch says, "devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems" in readings which are not overly concerned with what is within the text itself, or the world – "a world" – created within the text. For such readings, it is Goethe's *Weltliteratur* that is established as the core methodological text, formulated as it was in the context of his voracious reading in "a surprisingly wide range of foreign literatures" (2014a: 4). *This* is world literature understood as time-place-thing, but the paradoxical approach that

Rabindranath gives us in his essay is the claim that world literature is not an addition of parts; it is not an addition of, say, French, Serbian, Persian, German, and other national literatures. It is not being claimed, of course, that the field of world literature subscribes *only* to this additive model. With its focus on translation, exchange, mediation, and comparison, World Literature does offer perspectives that go beyond this additive model. It is Tagore's emphasis on the particular author/text, his insistence, rather, that "what is singular in any text is the universalizable" (Damrosch and Spivak 2011: 478) that is new and attention-worthy.

"Do not think for a moment that I will be the one to show you the way in this World Literature – we will all have to carve out our own paths according to our individual abilities," Rabindranath said in the concluding paragraph of his essay. The metaphors he uses, of world literature or the literatures of the world understood as the self in relation to the other, as an emanation, as a site permanently under construction, as *a* world, are anti-historicist, predicated upon an understanding privileging fragmentation rather than the whole, the resistance of the untranslatable rather than the market circulation of translatability: "Modern poetry is a poetry of the object," Barthes says, but the object here is "each poetic word" ([1953] 1968: 50). Rabindranath may not have been making a point about modernist formalism, but one is struck by the uncanny similarity in phrasing to Rabindranath's when Barthes says: "Hunger of the Word, common to the whole of modern poetry, makes poetic speech terrible and inhuman," "full of gaps and full of lights," "filled with absences," and "without stability of intention." "The bursting upon us of the poetic word then institutes an absolute object," and here, for Barthes, the object cannot have any "resort to the content of the discourse"; it is not about the subject matter, because it "turns its back" on both "History" and "social life" ([1953] 1968: 50). Emily Apter discusses Badiou's notion of hyper-translation in conjunction with Cassin's ultimate goal of "consequential relativism" to understand untranslatability in a similar way. Badiou, as she points out quoting Kenneth Reinhard, "*sublimates* Plato's text, in Lacan's sense of sublimation as 'the elevation of an object to the status of a Thing' which is precisely to *de*-familiarize it, to bring out its strangeness," so that one does not in "any way privilege the aura of the original" (2013: 27; 22–23). This anti-historicism is something found also in Rabindranath's emphatic assertion in his last essay: *Dūr hok ge tomār itihās* – "to hell with your history" – insisting there too that literature is a specific kind of discourse, distinct from the discourses of history, politics, and ethics; reiterating, to cite Guha, that "in his own field of creativity Rabindranath has been entirely alone and tied to no public by history" (2003: 81).

Barthes's rejection of the markers of "history" and "social life" in his understanding of the poetic is reminiscent of Rabindranath's. Both thinkers abhor these categories because they also reject the narrative mode. Rabindranath in *Viśvasāhitya* rails against understanding literature as an artificial construct (*krittim racanā*). This complaint about the artificiality of constructs is also a complaint against narrative the way Barthes reads it: "the ideal instrument for every construction of a world; it is the unreal time of cosmogonies, myths, History and Novels. It presupposes a world which is constructed, elaborated, self-sufficient, reduced to significant lines, and not one which has been sent sprawling before us, for us to take or leave" ([1953] 1968: 30). Speaking of the "serial story" of those "long recitatives," the Novel and History, Barthes called them "plane projections of a curved and organic world of which the serial story . . . presents, through its involved complications, a degraded image" (29). At a particular historical moment in the nineteenth century, the function of the narrator, the preterite, and the third person "exploded reality to a slim and pure logos, without density, without volume, without spread, and whose sole function is to unite as rapidly as possible a cause and an end" (29). The order of Narrative brings coherence and a structure of relations to reality; thanks to it, Barthes points out, "reality is neither mysterious nor absurd" anymore: "it is clear, almost familiar, repeatedly gathered up and contained in the hands of a creator" (31).

It might be too much to ask that discussions of world literature disassociate themselves from the markers of whatever we understand to be the "world." Still, the remarkable congruence of these theories with the novel form or narrative needs noting. Theorists of world literature by and large seem beholden to the rationale of the narrative, "whose sole function is to unite as rapidly as possible a cause and an end," (29) and in doing so, subscribe to the pedagogical imperative of connecting the world to History, and thereby of imparting to it the second-order appearance of a constructed artifact of the sort Rabindranath warns it should not be.

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PART III

⋆

TRANSREGIONAL WORLDING

14

East Asia as Comparative Paradigm

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In her book *The World Republic of Letters*, which has become widely known and influential in the study of world literature, Pascale Casanova describes the formation of the world's international literary space as a historical process of the emergence of literary and cultural centers in Western Europe and then the gradual acknowledgment of claims to literary "legitimacy" and "assets" in the rest of the world as peripheries. The historical narrative she presents begins with European Renaissance, and her cultural cartography has its center located in Paris. It is only in the twentieth century, according to Casanova, that "with decolonization, countries in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and Asia demanded access to literary legitimacy and existence as well" (2004: 11). Such a statement ignores both historical periods before the Renaissance and geographical regions outside Paris or France, and in her account of the "world republic of letters," Asian literature did not exist until the mid-twentieth century as a by-product of "decolonization." Apparently, Casanova does not know Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's remarks about his reading experience of a Chinese novel in formulating his idea of *Weltliteratur*, when Goethe tells his young friend Johann Peter Eckermann that the Chinese had produced thousands of novels long before the Europeans, "when our forefathers were still living in the woods," as he put it dramatically (Goethe 2014: 19). Neither has she paid any attention to the eminent French comparatist René Etiemble, who criticized Hugo Meltzl's idea of *Dekaglottismus* as too narrow and provincial because outside the ten European languages proposed by Meltzl for comparative literature, many of the non-European languages, of which Etiemble mentioned Sanskrit, Chinese, Tamil, Japanese, Bengali, Persian, Arabic, and Marathi, among others, had already produced great literary works "when most of the literatures of the *Dekaglottismus* either did not exist, or were still in their infancy" (Etiemble 2014: 88). Current discussions of world literature often recall the initial moment when Goethe spoke of *Weltliteratur* in the 1820s and note the many articulations, since the 1960s,

of the desire to go beyond the Eurocentric limitations of comparative literature. When we talk about world literature today, we cannot ignore such discussions and articulations.

Casanova, however, seems to have a different view of history colored by an ahistorical presentism. "The claim that Paris is the capital of literature is not an effect of Gallocentrism," she argues, "but the result of a careful historical analysis showing that the exceptional concentration of literary resources that occurred in Paris over the course of several centuries gradually led to its recognition as the center of the literary world" (Casanova 2004: 46–47). But literary history of the world surely dates back much earlier than the "several centuries" since the rise of the French Pléiade in the sixteenth century, and despite her claim to the contrary, Casanova's "careful historical analysis" is deeply flawed because in talking about "the world republic of letters," she did not even heed Goethe's idea of *Weltliteratur* or Etiemble's critique of *Dekaglottismus* for its Eurocentric limitations. Not only did big non-Western empires in history such as the Persian, the Ottoman, or the Chinese not come into the purview of her "historical analysis," but even the Greco-Roman literary space did not feature in her "world republic of letters." Casanova's view, however, is quite influential now with her book translated into English and circulating beyond its originally intended French readership, and among her readers today, it is not uncommon to find an uncritical embracement of a simplistic "world-system" view based on the dichotomy between Europe as center and the rest of the world as peripheries. Such an unabashedly Eurocentric view of the literary world and such incredible erasure of the rich history of Asian literatures make it all the more necessary to set the record straight and to present East Asia as a paradigm in the study of comparative literature in general, and of world literature in particular.

East Asia refers to the vast region in the eastern part of the Asian continent with China, Japan, and Korea as the major countries, and it also includes Vietnam in its premodern period before its being colonized by the French in the mid-nineteenth century. This region is sometimes called the Sinosphere because it was historically under the influence of China, Chinese intellectual traditions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, the last of which in turn originated in India, China's South Asian neighbor. This region is also known as the Chinese scriptworld because it had adopted the Chinese writing system as the official and major medium of communication and formed a relatively coherent cultural and literary space outside Europe for more than a millennium, long before the Renaissance. The cultural influences, connections, and interactions among these countries in the region have a long and

complicated history and may still offer some useful ideas and insights for our understanding of contemporary issues. In the nineteenth century, Europe rose to be the dominant power in the world, and since the end of World War II in 1945, the United States in North America has become the most powerful country in the postwar world. In comparison, East Asia, with the exception of Japan, has been relatively weak and underdeveloped, and it has therefore been considered less important in world affairs. In the late twentieth and the early twenty-first century, however, some fundamental changes are taking place in an increasingly globalized world, particularly the rapid growth of Asian economies and the rise of China, which present a challenge to the West-dominated world order. Many of the old paradigms originating in the nineteenth century in social sciences and the humanities are losing their explanatory power and need to be modified and updated. Global history, for example, puts emphasis on the connectedness of the world from a broader perspective than the nineteenth-century norm of national histories, and world literature examines literary and cultural traditions far beyond the Eurocentric concentration and the Western canon. This is the reason why Casanova's Paris-centered "world republic of letters" appears so outdated and provincial in our understanding of world literature today. It is important that we understand Goethe's announcement of the advent of world literature in the nineteenth century from a new contemporary perspective: "National literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of World-literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach" (Goethe 2014: 19). The contemporary horizon tends to be larger than the national one, and regional connections warrant our rethinking of the cultural and literary interrelations before the nineteenth century and beyond national boundaries, from regional and even global perspectives.

As Joshua Fogel emphasizes in *Articulating the Sinosphere*, it is important to examine the interrelations of East Asian countries, in particular China and Japan, to have a grasp of the entire region. He argues that "a full understanding of either China or Japan requires bringing the other into account" (Fogel 2009: 1). He compares the Sinosphere as "a sphere similar to the Bohr atom, in which something later called China was housed at the core," but unlike the Bohr atom, which allows for only one nucleus, the Sinosphere is mutable with "many different nuclei," as "different Chinas inhabited at the core of the Sinosphere at different times" (4). The Sinosphere is, in other words, a temporally and spatially evolving concept in history. The first mention of Japan and Korea is found in a Chinese historical book, *Records of the Three Kingdoms* by Chen Shou (233–297), in which there is some description of the

state of Wa, which would become what was later known as Japan. Another Chinese historical book, the *Later Han History* by Fan Ye (398–445), contains the earliest record of an emissary from the state of Wa traveling to the capital city of Luoyang in the year 57 CE to pay tribute to Emperor Guangwu of the Han dynasty. From such early historical records to increasingly complicated interrelations in trade and cultural exchanges till the late nineteenth century, just before the end of the Qing dynasty in China and the modernization of Meiji Japan, Fogel offers a fascinating historical overview of the long Sino-Japanese relations of more than 2,000 years, with his major interest focused on cultural interrelations. In Fogel's presentation, Sinosphere was by and large a cultural concept sustained by cultural activities, and it became dysfunctional in more recent history as the cultural relations were overshadowed by commercial, political, and even military interests. "When Japan launched and won the first Sino-Japanese War, leading to the Treaty of Shimonoseki," Fogel argues, "the grounds of the two nations' bilateral ties once again radically shifted, and the Sinosphere became a distant memory at best" (2009: 6). Sinosphere is, thus, a concept belonging to the historical past of East Asia, before the Western influence extended to the East. And yet, with the changing situation, and a much more globally connected world in which we find ourselves today, the Sinosphere may still be relevant to us precisely as a cultural concept in our effort to rethink East Asia as a culturally connected region vis-à-vis the Eurocentric view that marginalizes Asia and the other non-Western parts of the world.

The Sinosphere was connected through ideas and a written language. As early as the fifth century, as Fogel notes: "The [Chinese] *Song shu* contains memorials copied out in full from the Wa kings seeking acceptance within the Sinosphere, and these memorials are written in elegant literary Chinese, a fact that indicates the presence of some well-trained scribes, perhaps from Japan's ally of Paekche, in service to Wa" (13). This is an important textual evidence of the adaptation of classical Chinese as the written language in Japan in the fifth century and even earlier in Korea, and such cultural adaptations reached their peak in the seventh and the eighth centuries in Tang China with "large-scale embassies from Japan to China and back, in which the nonmartial, civil culture of China – both religious and secular – was studied with extraordinary assiduousness and transmitted, along with countless texts, back to the home islands" (15). Japanese and Korean scholars studied in China and many of them took the civil examinations and served in the administrative system of Tang China, which shows, as Fogel remarks, that "elite culture in East Asia was a much more open and widely shared

phenomenon than it was at any point before or afterward" (18). For a long time in history, texts in Chinese, including literary texts of important poets and prose writers, were circulating in East Asia in the original, and the Sinosphere constituted a shared literary space beyond borders of the different countries and their linguistic and cultural differences.

The Sinosphere has multiple nuclei, and in the last years of the declining Qing empire in China in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, Japan quickly modernized itself and became the new center of the Sinosphere, but a center with the West as model. "Now, Chinese flocked to Japan, not to acquire or even seriously study Japanese culture," says Fogel, "but through learning Japanese to acquire Western culture" (50). Indeed, numerous students went from China to Japan at the end of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth century. Many important cultural and political figures in modern Chinese history, from Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), revolutionary leader and President of the Republic of China after the collapse of the Qing dynasty, and Zhang Taiyan (1869 – 1936), a revolutionary thinker and important scholar, to Liang Qichao (1873–1929), a prolific writer and scholar who introduced many modern concepts to the Chinese, and Lu Xun (1881–1936), an iconoclastic critic of the Chinese tradition and, probably the most well-known writer in modern Chinese literature, had all lived in Japan for years. Many modern concepts and terms of "Western learning" were first introduced by the Japanese using Chinese characters as old bottles for the new wine of Western ideas, and these were later easily adopted in China. "Japan's victories over China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) and Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) and its consequent status as a world power," Karen Thornber argues, "were watersheds in the history of East Asian relations. As the strongest Asian nation in the region, Japan quickly became the embodiment of the new Asian modernity" (2009: 34). Cultural interactions again became intense within the Sinosphere with Japan at the center, as many Chinese and Korean intellectuals looked toward Japan as a model for modernization, at least before the Japanese militarists prevailed on the political scene, colonized Korea in 1910, occupied Manchuria in 1931, and started massive invasions into China in 1937. A modernized Japan embarked on a road of imperialist war and invasion just like the modernized European powers in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century.

Literary studies in the globally connected world provides a new and different perspective today. The use of classical Chinese in East Asia for thousands of years in the premodern world has attracted more attention in

recent scholarship, and the concept of "scriptworld" proposed by David Damrosch in studying the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in cuneiform writing is adopted to describe the circulation of texts and ideas in the form of Chinese characters in East Asia. "In their mixture of phonetic and pictographic elements," Damrosch argues, "cuneiform and hieroglyphics are comparable to the Chinese script, with its substantial phonetic dimension even amid its tens of thousands of characters" (2016: 145). The Chinese scriptworld facilitated the circulation of ideas through Confucian or Buddhist canon in East Asia and functioned like "a scaffolding of concepts derived from canonical texts through which literacy was often acquired," says Sowon Park. "The interconnections built through a common script – a 'scriptworld' – are more robust than is usually recognized" (Park 2016: 138). The Chinese scriptworld reminds us that, apart from the last 200 years, Confucian and Buddhist canons and the wide use of Chinese scripts did make this part of the world linguistically and culturally more connected than the present, and that this long historical period with many shared cultural values in East Asia may offer some helpful ideas and insights for us to rethink the interrelationships not only of East Asian countries but also of the world at large.

Like the story of the Sinosphere, the story of the Chinese scriptworld is again one of historical change from the premodern to the modern era. "Prior to the twentieth century classical Chinese was the 'universal written language' of China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam," as Lim Hyung Taek remarks (Lim 2016: 246). With the introduction of European ideas of the nation-state and nationalism, however, the rise of nationalism in East Asian countries in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries gradually challenged the "universal" and pushed the different countries toward specific "national" identities in terms of race, language, and culture. In Korea, the idea of a "national language" was already anticipated in King Sejong's invention of *hangul* in the mid-fifteenth century, but *hangul* as an indigenous Korean alphabet was not used in literary writing by Korean intellectuals until the twentieth century. It was the decline of the Chinese empire of Qing under the attack of Western powers and a modernized Japan that had precipitated the disintegration of the Sinosphere and the Chinese scriptworld. "With the defeat of China in the war, the traditional sinocentric order rapidly dissolved," says Lim. "Among the many changes were laws to replace classical Chinese with a 'national language'" (250). Interestingly, while the Koreans would abandon Chinese script completely when they used *hangul*, many Japanese scholars at the time chose to preserve Chinese scripts in *wakan konkōbun* (和漢混交文) or a Japanese-Chinese mixed style of writing, which

is still used in Japan today. Institutions such as Tō-a dōbunkai (東亞同文會, Society for Shared Script in East Asia, 1898) and Kanji tōitsukai (漢字統一會, Society for Unifying Chinese Script, 1907) were set up in Japan; both "typify the Japanese orientation and volition toward the *dongmun* (同文, common letter) and *hanmun* (Chinese)" (252).

Why did the Japanese foreground the idea of an East Asian commonality under the rubric of Chinese scripts at the very time when Japan was modernizing itself? This modernization process, deemphasized Chinese influence, and a turn away from Asia, in order to integrate with Western civilization after the successful Meiji Restoration of 1868, and, especially, after the victory in the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. "Why do the Japanese publicize *wakan konkōbun* as the official writing system when it is heavily dominated by Chinese scripts?" asks Lim. He detects a political agenda underneath the slogan of unification by the Chinese scripts, for retaining Chinese scripts and promoting a pan-Asianism by the Japanese were motivated by the idea of putting Japan at the center of the Sinosphere in place of China, and these were therefore "thinly veiled justifications of Japan's colonization of Korea" (252). The Japanese idea of pan-Asianism is, thus, fraught with implications of war and imperialist expansion in the early twentieth century, when Japan colonized Korea and invaded China and its other Asian neighbors, a dark period of recent history that continues to haunts East Asia. "The Chinese scriptworld is an historic rather than a current entity," Lim comes to the conclusion in a way just like Fogel does in his discussion of the Sinosphere. And yet, in today's globalized world with many changes taking place in East Asia and in the world at large, Lim also calls for recognition of the connectedness of the East Asian region by revisiting the idea of the Chinese scriptworld. "Recognition is key to dialogue and interchange between East Asian nations," says Lim. "Though East Asian literature is separated by the borders of nations and national languages today, they emerged from the ruins of a once coherent Chinese scriptworld. For a renewal of an East Asian literature," he continues to argue, "the borders of nations and languages must once again be crossed. To pave the path of reconnection, it is imperative for East Asian intellectuals to reclaim our common heritage of communication and exchange" (257).

The case of Vietnam is also instructive. "For over a thousand years," as John Duong Phan remarks, "the only language read or written in the area of northern Vietnam was Literary Sinitic" (2016: 277). In the mid-seventeenth century, Christian missionaries designed what would later be known as *Quôc Ngu* (national language or 國語) for the Vietnamese by using a Latinized

alphabet, but it was not until 1919 that "the French-installed emperor Khãi Định permanently dismantled Vietnam's civil service examinations, and with them, an entire system of political selection based on proficiency in Literary Sinitic" (275–76). In examining the Vietnamese transition of script systems, Phan questions how strongly a script system like Chinese could have held its influence on the circulation of ideas and cultural values in East Asia, because today, as Phan puts it, "Vietnam is the only culturally East Asian nation that uses a Latin alphabet" (276). In this case, however, the French colonial power certainly played a decisive role in dismantling the Chinese scriptworld in favor of a Latinized alphabet invented by Christian missionaries. There is no question that Western colonialism and the rise of nationalism had brought about the demise of the Sinosphere and the Chinese scriptworld at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the early twentieth century.

When we revisit the Sinosphere or the Chinese scriptworld, we see how the Sinitic culture evolved around a set of Confucian classics and the Buddhist canon in East Asia. In Korea, a Royal Confucian Academy was established in as early as 682, and a civil examination system modeled on the Chinese was set up in 788. Most Korean writers would be trained from a young age in reading Chinese classics and be examined on their ability to write poems and prose in literary Chinese. Just as in China, the civil examination system created an elite class of literati-officials closely identified with their ability to compose poetry and prose in classical Chinese. "The literati that constituted the dominant social class in Korea wrote almost exclusively in Chinese, the main source of their prestige and power," as Peter Lee observes. "This class, which controlled the canon of traditional Korean literature and critical discourse, adopted as official the genres of Chinese poetry and prose" (Lee 2003: 7). To be able to write poetry in Chinese became the hallmark of literary achievement in both Korea and Japan, and as a result, much of the literary works in premodern Korea, Japan, and Vietnam is written in Chinese or a form of Chinese mixed with the native tongue.

With the rise of nationalism, many modern Korean and Japanese scholars turned their attention to neglected native genres and popular literature. These they saw as embodying their national cultures as against Chinese, which they perceived as foreign and elitist. This tendency, Lee argues, "brought about a reactionary movement to belittle all writings in Chinese, which in Korea comprised more than two-thirds of the extant literature and in Japan less than one-third" (9). As a literary historian, Lee criticizes the dichotomous view of the foreign versus the native and the erasure of past history in the name of modernization and national identity.

In this context, we may recognize the significance of Sinosphere and the Chinese scriptworld as meaningful cultural concepts for our understanding of world literature. In an inclusive and expansive idea of world literature beyond national boundaries, literary scholars and historians now tend to see the arbitrary nature of the dichotomies between the native and the foreign, the pure and the hybrid, or the self and the other. As narrow-minded nationalism and its imaginary of ethnic or racial purity have led to horrific violence and war in the twentieth century, it becomes edifying to revisit history with a global and comparative lens, one that is also attentive to transformative possibilities in the future.

Literary canon changes as the social and cultural environment does, so we should put modern canonization in a historical perspective. "Saikaku (1642–1693) and Bashō (1644–1694)," as Lee reminds us, "now considered great masters of Japanese vernacular literature, were rated lower than Rai Sanyō (1780–1832), a writer of history and poetry in Chinese in the Tokugawa period when Chinese was the official written language" (9). The change of canon in this case was particularly related to the change of political and ideological situations. "Although the formation of the modern discipline of literary studies since the Meiji Period opened scholarship to questions of interpretation and criticism," as Wiebke Denecke argues, "it also enshrined 'national literature' (*kokubungaku* 国文学) – with a focus on vernacular works such as the *Man'yōshū* and the *Tale of Genji* as the canon of Japanese literature – and marginalized the grand old Sino-Japanese literary tradition" (2014: 293). Lee notes the same phenomenon with regard to a new modern sense of Korean literary history that tends to "accord priority to the vernacular literature that constitutes a distinct tradition – distinct, some argue, because it is a repository of native beliefs and values that speaks for the common people, as contrasted to elite literature in Chinese devoid of popular concerns," says Lee (2003: 9–10). In this new literary-historical consensus, however, he sees "an inherent danger of conceiving it as an ideological project from an adversarial standpoint" when the new literary history is motivated by a nationalistic sentiment. It is therefore the task of the literary historian, Lee argues, "to evaluate not only native (and popular) works neglected in the past but also to examine works in Chinese once considered canonical but now neglected" (10). In the *History of Korean Literature*, which he edited, Lee puts emphasis on a more balanced and historically accurate view, fully acknowledging the importance of Chinese language and literature for traditional Korean literature. "In traditional Korea," he notes, "every educated man and woman wrote poetry in literary Chinese – and judging from the extant collected works of

individual writers, the amount of poetry they wrote is staggering" (40). He, thus, highlights the significance of the Chinese scriptworld for an adequate understanding of the history of Korean literature beyond nationalism.

Haruo Shirane makes a similar point with regard to Japanese literature and aesthetics. The idea of Japanese literature (*Nihon bungaku*) as "the unique product of a nation called Japan" and "to embody the cultural characteristics of the 'people' of Japan," Shirane argues, is in fact an ideological construct, "a product of modern, nineteenth-century European notions of literature and nationhood," because Japanese literature "has been deeply influenced by non-Japanese cultures, particularly that of China up until the late nineteenth century, and by Europe from the late nineteenth century onward" (2002: 165). In the eighteenth-century *kokugaku* (native learning) movement, scholars like Kamo no Mabuchi and Motoori Norinaga already started to valorize such old texts as the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kojiki* as pure native texts uncontaminated by foreign, i.e., Chinese, influence; and this tendency was further strengthened during the Meiji period because "canon formation in the Meiji period was part of global nationalism in which Japan as a nation competed directly with other rival nation-states" (171). In an attempt to present a corrective to this nativist historiography, the *Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, coedited by Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki with David Lurie, offers ample discussion of the interactions between Chinese literature and traditional Japanese literature in the historical context of the Sinosphere and the Chinese scriptworld. These literary historical developments have become much more significant with the contemporary resurgence of the idea of world literature.

But is the idea of Sinosphere problematic for its inherent Sinocentrism? Is China as the center of the Sinosphere also repressive in its own way? The answer depends on how Sinosphere or China is to be defined and understood. In ancient China, the sense of belonging was quite different from what a modern concept of national identity signifies. In the Sinocentric idea of Chinese culture as the civilized (*hua* 華) and the non-Chinese as barbarian (*yi* 夷), ancient China is not very different from ancient Greece. Both are exemplary of what I have called "reference cultures," i.e., cultures that "provide other cultures with points of cultural and scriptural references," and in which "we find an ethnocentric tendency characteristic of such 'reference cultures' that mostly denigrate translation and its contribution to the expansion of one's cultural horizon" (Zhang 2012: 4–5). So, there is the problem of Sinocentrism, especially with the added nationalistic biases in modern times. In premodern China, however, what was understood as

Chinese and civilized was not ethnically or racially defined, but was first and foremost a cultural concept. "In ancient conceptualization, there was another criterion to differentiate the Chinese and the four barbarians, and that criterion was not consanguinity, but culture," as Qian Mu argues in his *Introduction to the History of Chinese Culture*. "China was the general name of city states based on an agrarian way of life, while all those not engaging in an agrarian society, nor forming a city state, were called barbarians" (Qian 1988: 35). Yu Ying-shih also makes a similar point when he remarks: "For Chinese concepts, culture is more important than nationalities. Whether it was 'all under heaven' or 'China,' these were all inclusive cultural concepts in ancient times, transcending the simple boundaries of politics, race or ethnicity" (Yu 1993: 18). As a cultural concept, then, the idea of Chineseness became rather fluid and not bounded by racial consanguinity or geographical provenance, and this comes out quite clearly in a famous passage from the *Mencius*, in which the great Confucian master spoke of the ancient "sage kings" Shun and Wen as originally "barbarians":

> Shun was a barbarian from the East as he was born in Zhufeng, moved to Fuxia, and died in Mingtiao. King Wen was a barbarian from the West as he was born in Qizhou and died in Biying. Their native places were far from one another for more than a thousand miles, and their times were separated from one another for more than a thousand years, but when they had their ways in China, their deeds matched perfectly like the two halves of a tally. These two sage kings, one earlier and one later, held exactly the same standards.
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> (Jiao 1987: 537–40)

Now Shun and King Wen are ancient cultural heroes in the Chinese tradition, greatly revered by Confucius himself. It is shocking to realize, as Mencius here points out by specifying their places of birth, that they were originally "barbarians" (*yi*). This passage provides a powerful evidence to the argument that in ancient China, the concept of Chineseness was culturally defined, which makes it possible for different individuals or groups to claim to be Chinese, i.e., civilized, even if they are not from "China" as such. When the Manchu established the Qing dynasty after the demise of the Ming in 1644, some Korean and Japanese scholars declared that China had fallen under barbarian rule, and true Chinese civilization had moved to Korea or Japan respectively. In such times, Huang Chun-chieh argues, "the concept of 'China,' which in ancient Chinese classics had emerged from a 'cultural China' and a 'political China,' underwent a new transformation when it was spread to the border regions in East Asia, such as Japan and Taiwan"

(2006: 94). In Japan of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), says Huang, "the concept of 'China' was appropriated to refer to Japan rather than to China proper, which was in line with the growth of Japanese subjectivity in the modern Japanese history of ideas" (92). Yamaga Sokō (1622–85), a Confucian scholar at the time, claims that "what is at the center of the operations of heaven and earth, and at the juncture of the four seasons, would not get the extreme conditions of the wind and the rain, of the cold of winter or the heat of summer, thus having futility in its land and genius in its people, and that may be called China." With these words, Huang argues, Yamaga Sokō had "deconstructed the old meaning of 'China' in Chinese classics as referring to the Chinese empire as political and cultural center, and successfully presented Japan as more qualified to be called 'China' (literally the Central Kingdom) because Japan got to 'the middle' culturally and politically, far superior to what was geographically the Empire of China" (95). When the concept of China still had tremendous value or cultural capital, Japanese Confucians in the Tokugawa period would appropriate China for Japan as the center of the Sinosphere.

The Confucian political philosophy, as Watanabe Hiroshi argues, was not suitable to the Japanese society run by the shoguns, and therefore Japanese scholars in the Tokugawa period faced this basic question: "Japan either needed to accept the thought and institutions introduced from overseas as universal, and thus modify its own reality in accordance with them, or forthrightly declare them not to be universal, but foreign, and stand by doing things in the established Japanese manner" (2012: 91). Between Japanese reality and the foreign Confucian thought, Japanese Confucians were forced to make a difficult choice, and scholars like Yamaga Sokō chose to adapt Confucian teachings to the reality of Japanese society. Sokō claimed that Japanese samurai should master what he called "sacred teachings" (*seigaku*), which would enable them to fight wars with skills and success. "Was this really Confucianism?" asks Watanabe, and he quotes Sokō's words as the reply: "Japan was actually the center of the world and perforce possessed from the beginning the essence of the Way spoken of by the Confucians. Even if it wasn't exactly in accordance with the Confucian teachings, it was fine for Japan to do things its own way, nor should it feel inferior to China" (90–91). In effect, we witness here the transformation of the concept of China as the movable core of the Sinosphere. Japanese Confucians of the Tokugawa period were making a claim for Japan as the center of the Sinosphere.

As Fogel argues, the Sinosphere has, or should have, multiple nuclei, but in the modern period of East Asian history, it became a problem when different

nations claimed their own centrality without allowing for the possibility of multiple centers. The unavoidable consequences, as we know, were disastrous, with conflict and war dominating the modern history of East Asia. Perceiving these developments from the vantage point of the global present, I argue that a multi-centered Sinosphere is a much more constructive concept that demonstrates the cultural and literary richness and diversity of the region. For this reason, the literary space must be differentiated from the national, the political, and the military space, and the major difference lies precisely in the plurality of centers in the literary space versus the centralized power in the political or military space. This also provides a powerful argument for the value of literary studies or the humanities in general as a positive force for promoting cross-cultural understanding and peace rather than narrow-minded nationalistic identities and allegiances that tend to breed violence and war. In this sense, then, the old cultural concept of China in the Sinosphere may offer some insights into the operations of literary and cultural interrelationships.

Why should the international literary space today only allow for one nucleus? Why don't we acknowledge the literary and cultural significance of multiple centers such as Paris, London, New York, Barcelona, Berlin, just to mention a few from the West, and Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul, Busan, Tokyo, and Kyoto in East Asia, all flourishing at the same time? Why don't we recognize multiple centers in Eastern Europe, South America, South and Southeast Asia, and many other places in between? The norm of literary analysis based on national traditions has shown its limitations, and in the study of comparative and world literature today, there must be a paradigmatic change from the national to the regional or even global, from a heavy concentration on the modern to a more expansive horizon that includes the historical past and the premodern. It is in such a broad context beyond narrow-minded nationalism that we may rethink East Asia and the ideas of Sinosphere and Chinese scriptworld as potentially meaningful in offering some insights into the idea of an alternative paradigm.

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15

Latin American Baroque: Or Error by Design

DORIS SOMMER

Transregional cultures announce themselves in the hybrid name for Latin America. Its first name is classic, linking the region to prestigious imperial tastes and habits, hangovers from old world powers that imposed languages with Latin roots. But the family name, America, grounds the classics in wild new worlds. The push and pull between competing lineages in unfamiliar lands of displaced and replaced peoples gives Latin America both the curse of inconsistency – if you are an inflexible purist – and the blessing of freedom to continually invent oneself. Bitterness haunts deracination on a continental scale, but it is sweetened by the freedom to repurpose old roots for new cultures, a word that depends on cultivation.

That is why the arts are so important in Latin America. Art in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries, along with Haiti and other Creole nations, is simultaneously a *poetics*, a *politics*, and a *pedagogy*, writes Luis Camnitzer (2007: 14). He is a contemporary Uruguayan visual artist who also writes compelling essays. And his point about the three dimensions of innovation in Latin America rings true for almost anyone who knows the area; they wonder why they had not thought about it before. Camnitzer argues, irrefutably I think based on an impressive variety of examples from all the arts, that in Latin America creativity is always conceptual. In North Atlantic countries, Conceptualism is a period or an option, but in the South, it is the norm, practically a destiny. Few great artists in Latin America avoid political engagement, which amounts to teaching new perspectives and relationships. And their fuel has been a combination of excitement and responsibility to co-create new societies, one artist at a time – *hacer país* – in ways that link national project across the region while cultivating home-grown particularities.

Respectful Revenge

Though colonial literary classics were often written in isolation, one writer at a time, and while they were mostly directed to powerful Spanish readers, the parallel strategies, tone, and cultural complexity of the early canon show family resemblances. Shared features of rejoinders to Spain's seductive and oppressive power remind readers of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, for example, that comparable maneuvers animated writing by El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and by Alonso de Ercilla, among others. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the Mexican nun was outperforming her male contemporaries at their own literary and scientific games, on both sides of the Atlantic (see Ines de la Cruz 1982). This was some years after America's first mestizo historian took Spanish readers on a roller-coaster tour of Andean history in 1609. Did he want to lose them along the way as much as to perform his superior knowledge? (See de la Vega and Livermore 1987.) In 1569 Alonso de Ercilla had already written an epic paean to the Mapuche nation that he was sent to destroy (see de Ercilla y Zúñiga 2013). All evince pedagogical and political challenges to colonialism, in part, by adjusting literary forms that looked familiar – letters, chronicles, an epic poem. But Creoles twist the genres out of conventional shape so that Spanish readers cannot congratulate themselves on expertise. Instead, chastened, they submit to the baroque pleasure of contemplating how stable structures will bend under the pressure of detail; they submit until it means forfeiting administrative and military control. (Guamán Poma de Ayala chose not to pass under the radar, and his long letter of complaints to Spain's king stayed buried in an archive. And in 1782 by the time Tupac Amaru rebelled, Garcilaso's *Chronicles* were forbidden too.) Altering forms into unstable and dynamic baroque distortions of European genres was part of the displacement effect in transregional writing.

Think about the baroque in Latin America and it is difficult to think before or beyond the general style that describes an entire approach to history and to culture. It is "the result of transatlantic colonization, slavery, and transculturation, and is often posited as the foundational literary movement. The 'return of the Baroque' in the 20th and 21st centuries is often explained, in part, as an artistic and ideological reaction to the unfinished and continuing production and performance of identity in Latin America" (Horswell 2013, Introduction, par. 1). In fact, the baroque itself is probably best understood as an explosion of nervous – excited and self-doubting – responses to strains on Europe's political power, exacerbated by discovering America. Of course,

some historians don't need or don't bother to look beyond Europe to account for change. For them upheavals in taste and in practice are in-house confrontations with the authoritarianism of newly centralized European politics that followed allegedly clear lines of reason. But the real crisis of culture reached a tipping point, in Spain most dramatically, when the wars of Re-Conquest from the Moors ended in time to conquer a New World. According to José Antonio Maravall, the baroque was a "Historical Structure" (the subtitle of his book) that insisted on keeping urban order, no matter how complex the terrain or unwilling the subjects (Maravall 1975. See Maravall 1986. See also Lollini 2001: 187–96). The vast terrains and the various subjects of the Americas certainly posed significant challenges to the newly centralized sovereignty of the Spanish state. Where was the world's center? How did the Aztecs and the Incas achieve astounding levels of sophistication (Picon-Salas 1962: ix)?

From the wars of liberation on, intra-regional literary relationships moved beyond the mostly parallel nonconformity of colonial writing and developed into traceable connections. Liberators bracketed baroque doubt to take up revolutionary slogans as they circulated from one future country to another. Meanwhile Spanish censors, chronically inefficient but still menacing and murderous, stepped up their efforts throughout the region to block Enlightenment ideas and anti-imperial news. Politics had caught fire from incendiary French and English texts that ignited far-flung readers who recognized one another. The enthusiasm of Independence produced heroic poetry and also generated fratricidal competition for newly won republican power. So, long civil wars delayed the urgent work of nation-building. Peace finally came with a keen taste for romantic novels that might suture divisions through love. This foundational moment primes much of Latin American writing and deserves some detail in what follows.

Here I'll sketch what happened next. It was largely disappointment, in gritty naturalism from the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, renewed political purpose in the populism of the 1920s to 1950s, and various strains of neo-baroque irony throughout and until now. The 1920s and 1930s vibrate with Vanguard debates, experiments, and demolitions. Writers up-end first world paradigms that had lost luster in former colonies when Europe destroyed itself during World War I. Almost parallel but longer-lasting – if you pardon the breadth of my strokes – populist "novels of the land" cast peasants or workers as heroes who reclaim the nation from "foreign" usurpers. The Boom of the 1960s to 1980s blew away that predictable genre with sometimes hard-to-follow but always devastating intricacy. Experimental prose banished the hokey

heroism of the great national family and instead invited readers everywhere to recognize Latin America as a first-rate laboratory for literature where assumptions of progress-through-time unraveled in ironic or tragic humor. Magic realism, as it was called, became an oblique window onto the contradictions of liberalism worldwide. During those same years, in 1973, Roberto Schwarz wrote an essay on the tragic joke of liberal democracies, where elites profit from the structural inequality that economic liberalism depends on. Brazilian slaveholders are held up for derision, since they owned human beings and defended liberal ideals. But the irony about democratic "ideas out of place" condemns Europe too, and the United States, for the bad faith of egalitarian promises inside a system that works thanks to inequality (Schwarz 2014: xiv; see also Schwarz 1992).

The joke at Europe's expense had begun much earlier, practically with the conquest and the first slave ships when artisans and scribes developed ways to smuggle Indigenous and African elements into works dictated by powerful masters. Unauthorized religious systems and versions of history inscribed in architecture, handicrafts, and verbal arts still challenge scholars to discover the signs and styles of resistance in the everyday baroque cultures of conquered peoples. Probably the best-known expression of this tongue-in-cheek resistance is Oswald de Andrade's "Cannibalist Manifesto" (1928) from the Vanguard years between Europe's world wars. Brazilians don't dismiss Europeans, he teases; we eat them (1991: 35–37). Why resist the pleasure of chewing on difficult bones, when the effort is nourishing and builds local stamina? The apparently imported (baroque) question that he poses in English at the beginning of the short Portuguese piece provokes new power plays: "Tupi or not Tupi. That is the question." A generation later, it was Cuban Alejo Carpentier who would taunt Europeans for trying so hard to be original when that was second nature for Latin Americans who normally have more than one culture and belief system. In the prologue to his novel about the Haitian Revolution, *The Kingdom of This World* (1949), Carpentier pokes fun at formulaic French Surrealism, while he celebrates Latin American exuberance. If André Masson was stumped by the "obscene promiscuity of certain fruits" in Martinique, for example, Wilfredo Lam turned vegetation into lush orgies of form and color (Carpentier 1958: 2).

Lam is Black, and it matters. The challenge to give form to experiences of first and second natures that pull and push in competing directions is felt keenly on colored skins. The double consciousness of being Black, or Indigenous, and a citizen of the Americas is more than a toggle between feelings of racial exclusion and of patriotic solidarity. It is the endless tension

of belonging, the desire that W. E. B. Du Bois identified in *Souls of Black Folk* ([1903] 1973) to be one coherent self. The very desire for coherence, however, relinquishes a liberating baroque refusal to follow clear lines of power. Du Bois himself accepted the "gift of second sight" and refused to "bleach his Negro soul" for some illusory colorlessness (8, 9). Since racism is a function of liberalism throughout the hemisphere, it is worth mentioning James Baldwin too. He knew the always unfinished work of identity formation for Black people in the Americas, a strong case for necessarily hybrid new world subjects. Baldwin appreciated how second sight both enabled and undid him every time he was stopped by police:

> to discover, between inhaling and exhaling, that the self one has sewn together with such effort is all dirty rags, is unusable, is gone: and out of what raw material will one build a self again? The lives of men – and, therefore, of nations – to an extent literally unimaginable, depend on how vividly this question lives in the mind. It is a question which can paralyze the mind, of course; but if the question does not live in the mind, then one is simply condemned to eternal youth, which is a synonym for corruption.
>
> (Baldwin 1964)

Double consciousness describes the general condition of thinking in the colonizer's language while inhabiting a colonized body. The corollary aesthetic gain that comes from the pain of being at odds with oneself is a leitmotif and a fuel for much Latin American writing. Even white Creoles – such as Oswald de Andrade – are, by definition, culturally colored in Latin America, because Creole means servant born in the master's house. Therefore, my unavoidably brief overview of Latin America's literature can be both complex and self-evident if we look through colored glasses, except for the short unshakable period of starry-eyed inclusion.

Brief Advances, Haunting Afterglow

Between roughly 1850 and 1880, postwar writing projected more coherence than tension, more love meant to melt racial and class barriers than murderous divisions. The dream of a liberal embrace haunts our American republics, long after the founders of democratic fantasies have stirred from their power nap. Love was the language of nationalism throughout Latin America, so that mixing races and celebrating sexuality were patriotic projects. In fact, the intimacy between subjective (gendered, racial) personhood and modern patriotism is formative of modernity itself. Co-dependent and productive,

nationalism and interracial eroticism join one another under the commodious canopy of *laissez-faire*. The slogan sounds familiar from economics, but consider how subjective desire fueled both popular uprisings and partner choices, even when lovers wanted legitimate marriage. Sex, as Foucault said, explained everything by the time new nations were forming. If sex as patriotism sounds like a metaphor, Paul de Man showed how metaphors can sometimes register the forgotten contiguity of metonymy. Trace the rhetorical links between erotic love and love of country and you will find them co-habiting in the economics (household) of *laissez-faire*.

This was not always unproductive or oppressive, although almost always is a fair evaluation. For a short period, democratic culture and institutions seemed plausible as well as desirable. National novels, written by legislators and generals, celebrated civilian heroes who courted free-thinking heroines. If readers expect to find overpowering men or under-achieving women as protagonists of foundational fictions, they will be happily disappointed. After all, the pleasure of sociability is a hallmark of the human condition on which Adam Smith would sustain economic modernity. His *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) reminded possibly greedy readers to consider collaborations lest they remain alone and unengaged.

As almost always in the transnational flows that engendered Latin America, European masters remained delicious and digestible for the founding generation. Allow this moment to stand in for recurring responses of respect mixed with pride for outdoing one's masters. Romances written by founding fathers improved on European models, for example, by casting sentimental Werther-like heroes as heads of new families, not desperate suicides. Without losing reason to passion, idealized young men shared enough delicate looks and sublime feelings with idealized young women to create intimate family bonds. Their brand of productive heroism banishes the feudal opposition between passion and duty. Daniel Bello's lovely hands in *Amalia* don't hesitate to weave plots against dictatorship; the fragility of Rafael San Luis in *Martín Rivas*, and the heroes' penchant for tears throughout the period identify partners who can love and can also do business. The answer to European double binds was a Latin American double bottom line of personal passion and patriotic programs.

The French and English structures, so admired by Latin Americans, became good bones to chew on. Just as Domingo Sarmiento's respect for Europe's cities goaded him to surpass the metropoles with Argentine designs, American novelists saw their laconic or future history as a chance to bring Old World flirtations to happier or more promising conclusions (Sarmiento

1998: 12–13). Bartolomé Mitre, for instance, presumed to outdo Rousseau in *Soledad*, where a young bride hides from her aged royalist husband to read *Julie*. Reading ignites desire and almost launches Soledad on an adulterous adventure with an unworthy visitor. But she is saved from boredom and betrayal when her cousin comes home as a hero of Independence. He stays to marry her after the repentant old man blesses the couple and conveniently dies. Julie's impossible and incestuous dream to combine propriety with passion comes true for Soledad (Tanner 1979: 120–32).

In these American versions of great European novels (and in "Americanized" utopias such as George Sand's *Indiana*), love is sentimental.[1] It is not the jaded *Bovarysme* that desires to desire, nor romantic in the sense of unrequitable and unilateral that René Girard identifies in European literary affairs of the same period, or of any period. Futility, Girard says, is constitutive of desire: "Romantic passion is . . . exactly the reverse of what it pretends to be. It is not abandonment to the Other but an implacable war waged by two rival vanities" (1965: 108). When, for example, Stendhal's aristocratic heroine finally admits her passion for Julien, the struggle for recognition between them ends and his ardor cools, just as she had lost interest after he declared love. This instance of what Girard calls mimetic desire (imitating feelings imputed to an idealized rival) would become familiar later on, in novels written during the extended phosphorescence of national projects. *Hopscotch* and many of Cortázar's short stories come to mind, especially "Manuscript Found in a Pocket." Here, subway romances begin with a triangulated flirtation as protagonist and his prey both fix on their reflection in the car window rather than on one another. They end in despair and relief every time the escalator carries off a new conquest.[2]

But the mid-nineteenth century panted with mutuality. Diverse national contexts and partisan programs converged through romantic desire for union. What other common ground is there between Chile's vertical integration in *Martín Rivas* (1862) and Cuba's racial integration in *Cecilia Valdés* (1882), or Argentina's color-coded campaigns in *Amalia* (1851), Colombia's retrograde idyll in *María* (1867), Ecuador's Jesuitical paternalism in *Cumandá* (1877), Mexico's celebration of Indigenous heroism in *El Zarco* (1888), or Venezuela's vamp-raiding in *Doña Bárbara* (1927)? One answer is that

1 The title heroine is saved here much as Soledad is saved, by a childhood guardian with whom she escapes, from an abusive husband and an opportunist lover, to a remote island where justice reigns. As for the conventional love stories, see the ones Paul de Man mentions in contrast to *Julie* in his *Allegories of Reading* (1979: 215).

2 See Cortázar 1984: 249–63. The Spanish original, "Manuscrito hallado en un bolsillo," appeared in *Octaedro* (Madrid: Alianza, 1974, 49–66).

America is the common ground, the space for Bolivarian dreams of continental unity. This explains how Venezuelan Andrés Bello could write about Chile and sustain an argument about cultural autonomy for the continent; and why Bartolomé Mitre set his *Soledad* (1847) in Bolivia to write about his native Argentina; or why Cuban Martí celebrated the Dominican novel *Enriquillo* (1879) as the model for American writers in general. But the stunning commonality here is a shared erotic energy. National novels speak the language of love. And so, they haunt the continent with unrequited fantasies of pleasure in one another's company. Whether the romances end happily or not, they generate desire in young chaste heroes and their readers for equally young and chaste heroines. To call the books romances does not dismiss a public function. In Latin America, romance is a marriage between epic nationalism and intimate sensibility. European distinctions melt under the heat of procreative passion, Walter Scott and Chateaubriand in the same pot-boilers, *pace* Georg Lukács.[3]

Before new hierarchies congealed and while feisty foundational women were still at liberty to make moves, the nations' star-crossed lovers were crossing almost every kind of conventional border policed by old world power. In new Latin American republics and later throughout the world, love fanned previously unthinkable alliances between races, classes, economic interests, warring parties, religions. The passionate glow of this founding freedom inspired broad-bases of patriots when public education expanded and required teens to read romantic national novels. Founding fictions are remarkably similar worldwide, though the United States reads differently. Erotic love is hardly a positive political force in North America, and transcendentalism may be the closest we get to legitimating ecstasy. But in all cases the state demands unconditional love.

This helps to explain why Benedict Anderson's wager that nationalism can cure inherited hierarchies has failed, and why the dreams turn into haunting nightmares. As nation-states invented themselves along new and precarious borders, nationalism responded to nervousness by closing ranks. Streamlined linguistic (read cultural) homogeneity overcame the messiness of ethnic and gendered differences. After a brief mid-nineteenth-century honeymoon in democracy, the nation-building spouses no longer let desire lead. National

3 The Argentine exiles in Chile, though, did try to keep them apart in their pronouncements. Vicente Fidel López wrote that "any worship of the past, similar to Chateaubriand's paean to the Middle Ages in *Génie du christianisme* (1802), could only be unfavorable to Chile's future development." See Woll 1982: 17, where he refers to Fidel López's "Clacisismo y romanticismo," *Revista de Valparaíso*, No. 4 (May 1842).

families formed to be productive and to remain unpolluted. The turn from sparking new political love matches toward policing an insecure modernity is a turn toward the authoritarian culture of populism. Briefly put, populism is a patriarchal narrative; it casts the nation as a defiled mother who counts on her heroic husband to restore family values. The visceral and uncompromising structure of populism has long been the bane of new nations, sometimes called "developing countries" as if postcolonial powers didn't continue to develop and to stay ahead. It has now come home to roost in the Americas. Benedict Anderson's lesson about nationalism counts for populism too; it is not an ideology, but a non-negotiable feeling.

Boomerang Effect

What the Latin American "Boom" could not abide is the purposeful optimism of the foundational fictions and the populist sequels. If nation-builders projected future histories onto a beckoning continent, new novelists traced historical density on a map full of mangled projects. *A Hundred Years of Solitude*, just to take one masterful example, is no less driven by history than were earlier works. Gabriel García Márquez recounts the long century of Colombia's vexed past through a series of erotic alliances among principal families. But these families fight one another; they mistake foreign interest for friendly curiosity, and resist the talented outsiders whom romance should have invited in. The great Boom novels rewrite, or un-write, foundational fictions as the failure of romance, the misguided political erotics that could never really bind national fathers to mothers, much less the *gente decente* to emerging middle and popular classes. A whirlwind of in-fighting sweeps Macondo away. In Mexico it's corruption that dooms the post-revolutionary national family in *The Death of Artemio Cruz* (1964) by Carlos Fuentes.[4]

At first, Artemio seems like a classic father, less because he was an officer in Pancho Villa's army (Zapata was too radical) than because he was a lover. Artemio loved Regina; he braved battles to be with her. And she reciprocated, getting ahead of the army to prepare a cozy spot and a warm meal for her man, as did so many *soldaderas* of the Mexican Revolution. As they made love they thought back on the idyll of their first meeting, sitting on a beach, watching their double portrait in the water. So magic a memory, and so self-serving a vanishing act for the originary scene of rape. It was "a fiction that

4 Later, he wrote *Una familia lejana* (1980) to recompose the bourgeois family, transnationally. "This invocation of the family acts as a tourniquet to national disintegration in both cultural and historical dimensions," writes James V. Romano (1989).

she had conjured up that she (*sic*) might feel clean and innocent and sure of love . . . her pretty lie . . . It had no trace of truth. Neither did the truth: it was not true that he had gone into that Sinaloan pueblo just as he had gone into so many others, ready to grab the first woman who incautiously ventured outside. It was not true that a girl of eighteen had been thrown helplessly across his horse and carried back to the officers' dormitory to be violated in silence" (Fuentes 1964: 76).

You can tell that after the optimism of national consolidation, and on the heels of populist bad faith, Boom writers such as García Márquez, Fuentes, Vargas Llosa, Roa Bastos, and others uncovered festering contradictions and recovered a Latin American taste for baroque double consciousness. In an explosion of literary experiments that challenged readers' understanding and probably inspired Angel Rama to object to the elite *Lettered City* (1984), writers performed with perverse freedom to demolish existing narrative structures, along with the liberal false consciousness that touted democracy and progress. Freedom was no longer a political platform or goal, but an aesthetic autonomy, a sense of authority in authorship. The redundancy is intentional and meant to underline the liberties taken by Latin American writers of fiction, poetry, and drama.

Afrodescendent authors raise the ante for American Creole artists. The three-part label of Afro-Latin American pulls and pushes in even more directions than the already hybrid doubling of Latin American. Sometimes cast as informants rather than as autonomous artists, Black writers and Latin Americans in general, unhinge expectations and command attention to their art. The results can ripple out from creative moves into adjustments of collective consciousness. This is what Raymond Williams called "structures of feeling," still nameless experiences and intuitions that are too new to amount to ideologies or shared worldviews, but newly available for shared reflection thanks to the writing.[5] Indelibly Creole, literature in Latin America displays a strategic attention to formal literary decisions as opportunities for exercising authority, no matter how inevitable the content or the theme of the writing may be. This appreciation for artistic decision-making as a vehicle for freedom makes the study of literature significant beyond the historical or sociological information that creative writing offers. Even before they start writing, authors consider how to strategize representations of themes they might not have freely chosen. The freedom in colonial and postcolonial

5 Raymond Williams first used this term in his work *A Preface to Film*, with Michael Orrom (1954: 21–23).

literature (maybe in all literature) is in the *how* not the what. Will a piece be written as theatre or poetry? If poetry, will it be blank verse, sonnet, *coplas*, *décimas*, etc.? Will it be tragic, ironic? A novel, a short story, a poem, or a play? Will it trap readers and viewers in their own unspoken assumptions about values and desires? Before artful choices are made the options remain available, still unscripted, like a horizon of freedom.

Among the strategies whose effects have gripped readers, I mention only a few and invite you to continue the exploration. The moves that arrest me – and that surely connect with others still to be named – share a general feature which becomes the leitmotiv and even the theory of my reading: It is the unrelenting and structural doubling of codes, of systems, beliefs, meanings, languages, personae that I have called Latin America's baroque double consciousness. What distinguishes the liberties taken in Afrodescendent writing from the sometimes comparable moves made by white Creoles is, I think, the level of complicity with readers. It is probably fair to say that Black writers assume that Black readers will recognize the conflicting systems that structure the literature, while white readers may miss the signs. White people can be surprised, unsettled, or outraged to discover asymmetries of rights and expectations. They can even be the target of texts designed to trap them in complicity, not with the white author who exposes them, but with the murderous white power exposed. (*Cecilia Valdés* [1882] by Cirilo Villaverde is my favorite example, and *Sab* [1842] by Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda runs a close second.) But being Black obliges both authors and audiences to navigate multiple and unavoidable crosscurrents of culture. Enslaved Juan Francisco Manzano wrote his *Autobiography* (1996) to win freedom; but though the work is commissioned he sends winks to insiders about privileged information that he keeps others at a distance. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., offers a brilliant lesson in reading the difference in *The Signifying Monkey* (1988), a study of African American verbal arts as a tradition that catches white readers off guard and that enjoys the inside jokes among Black players.

Dangerous Creole Supplements

When white Creoles faced up to Latin America's hybrid identity during populist campaigns for national solidarity, they dreamed aloud of light brown populations descended from European and Indigenous forebears. Throughout the afterglow of national consolidation, official state-sponsored cultures from one country to the next have had little taste for racial differences. Though several recent constitutions recognize ethnic

minority rights, nations formed on the fantasy of flattening racial complexity into a manageable, coherent, and monochrome ideal still hope for one national family, with one language, one religion, and one color. It should be homogeneous, so that racial difference required *mestizaje* as a patriotic project. *Raza cósmica* was the term coined by José Vasconcelos in a 1925 book that colored the campaigns of racial neutralization throughout the hemisphere. Leaders were sure that their countries were in conflict (underdeveloped and unstable) because their untutored masses suffered from antagonism among races. The remedy was to erase race. Historically, there have been more murderous measures for eliminating racial difference. But the state-supported cultures of miscegenation did very little, predictably, to reduce inequality. Instead, they claimed that national citizens were already hybrid, which discredited reports of discrimination and thereby reinforced racism.

Africa is an added element that troubles truces between white people and Indians. Among the values that Africa brings is *difference* itself, in the sense that Audre Lorde (1984) understood the right to defer from oppressive structures and the fulcrum for breaking free from "the master's house" (110–13). In Jacques Derrida's terms, Africa is a "dangerous supplement," an internal difference that makes stable constructions tremble (1967). Adding Africa undoes a familiar architecture of the "lettered city" and shows the structure's vulnerability to other possible and unbidden elements. Afro-Latin America expands the range of improvised identities exponentially, because one extra piece portents another, and another. Afrodescendent writers and readers were the black sheep of national hybrid families; and many were understandably skeptical about ending racism with mere rhetoric. Too many cultural values on one side and chronic social abuses on the other were cautions against racial erasure. Giving up one's particularity was no sure path toward racial equality. Writers manage the power of resentment in clever ways.

It is an underappreciated value in Latin American literature. There is a special energy here, a combustible creativity that has simmered over centuries. I am convinced that we have yet to acknowledge how much art comes from anger. Our contemporary rhetoric of universal caring tends to exhort us to cultivate empathy with the underprivileged – as if difference necessarily marks a lack of privilege, as if identifying with someone else's feelings isn't also an abuse of the other's propriety (see Bloom 2016). We are even encouraged to respond with forgiveness to unspeakable crimes. So, it may sound unlikely to offer some praise for rage. But rage is a normal and healthy response to abuse. And literature can safely channel it through one

ventriloquist or another, sometimes to the sound of a kora that invokes the gods: "¡Rebel slaves/ fugitive slaves,/ children of vengeful Orichas/ born in America,/ will cleanse the terrible/ blind/ curse of Changó!" (Olivella 1983: 70). Zapata Olivella calls us to arms, all of us. This song comes long after the general invitation for everyone to get on board the slave ship heading for Colombia. "Forget school, verb tenses, the border between life and death, because this saga has no traces but the ones you leave: you are the prisoner, the discoverer, founder and liberator" (35).

Perhaps we are too used to the irony to comment on it, but Nicolás Guillén (1902–89) was a longtime member of the Partido Socialista Popular, and he became Cuba's national poet after the 1959 Revolution by baroque double-dealing. Guillén featured Cuba's marginalized Black population as the core of the renewed nation. Traditional Afro-Cuban rhythms and incantations to the gods gave contemporary (communist) culture its marching orders. Despite the unfriendly atmosphere for religious practices under Fidel Castro's watch, especially vigilant against African-based religions, unstoppable Afro-Cuban culture that included cults to the gods surely signaled an alternative modernity throughout the hemisphere. It is worth showcasing the complex maneuvers by Creole artists who turn daunting material and political conditions into the stuff of creative triumphs. Those victories should count toward claiming cultural territory, even when the artists themselves became exiles or martyrs. Though fundamental themes provide shared material for literary constructions the irreverence of writing literature can turn burdens into raw material. Latin American writers do not ask for permission to use available materials and methods; they take it. And reading for strategic decisions appreciates how writers can use the unenviable condition of coming late to European languages, of inevitable postcolonial double consciousness, of suffering physical affliction in the experience of slavery and enduring poverty, as the stuff for making something new.

Self-fashioning follows from the very act of writing at the margins, which can fray from relentless creativity. The burdens of colonialism and the bad faith of false promises identify many Creoles writers as subjects of other people's projects; but literary reframing turns hierarchy into the backdrop for baroque extravagance and instability. Latin American writing takes revenge on imperial cultures by making purposeful mistakes with inherited structures, including structures of feeling. This act of taking liberties identifies writers as agents and ambassadors of freedom (poets, politicians, and pedagogues), not so much because of what they write but because of how they do it. Since the effects of colonialism can ripple into lingering abuse, the bold

agency of self-authorizing literary arts highlights the liberating effects of adding dangerous supplements in continuing circuits of transregional and transracial collaborations and collisions.

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16

Comparative World Literature and Worlds in Portuguese

HELENA CARVALHÃO BUESCU

Why Comparative World Literature?

This chapter explores different kinds of possibilities as well as limits of contemporary debates on comparative literature as they relate to the reemergence of world literature. In particular, I explore the idea of a "comparative world literature" that resists singular, one-world, and one-market conceptions of world literature that have been the subject of such vigorous debates in the recent years. My perspective, although taking into account the panorama within American studies on these issues, does not entirely coincide with the latter. One of the main reasons for this is that the focal point from which I observe and describe the situation is different. If, according to Damrosch (2003), world literature is a refraction of universal literature that can be grasped through the figure of the ellipsis with two *foci*, then my own insertion in the field occurs from a change in the *focus* of observation and reflection, which demands a different perspective. My own point of entry into what I deem comparative world literature is a Portuguese perspective, and its historical and linguistics specificities in relation to "the world." My approach takes into account different locations around the globe in which different varieties of Portuguese are spoken, and from which emerge literary works that have a complicated relationship with a long and continuing literary tradition in Europe. My challenge is to integrate a non-Eurocentric approach to literatures in Portuguese from around the world with the fact that Portugal has particular literary, cultural, and historical ties with Europe. This is why I base my argument on the need for a comparative world literature. From where I stand, there is no true world literary approach that does not include perspectives from comparative literature. When I say "true" world literature, I mean to say that this discipline must in fact be much more than just a *list* of texts coming from different literary systems, or even

transcending their borders. It has to correspond to an *idea*, in the sense that Giorgio Agamben (1995) uses this concept as a key to structure his book on several aphoristic "ideas." I take my cue from his aphorism in the "Idea of Love":

> To live *in intimacy* with a stranger, not in order to draw him closer, or to make him known, but *rather to keep him strange, remote: unapparent* – so unapparent that his name contains him entirely. And, *even in discomfort*, to be nothing else, day after day, than the ever open place, the unwaning light in which that one being, that thing, remains forever exposed and sealed off. (61, emphasis added)

What Agamben is advocating here coincides with one of the main points I would like to make on comparative world literature: that, being intrinsically comparative, it has to maintain and render visible both the intimacy and the resistance between texts, the literary systems approached by it, and the readings they produce, much in the way Agamben describes in his "idea of love." If love is also about "keep[ing] [a stranger] strange, remote," that is, *estranged*, and about acknowledging the "discomfort" that this generates, a comparative world literature approach recognizes the senses of both intimacy and estrangement that arise when we approach literary works. There is no sense of the other without the comparatist *tertium quid* – and this is already the basic move of creating discomfort, recognizing edges. I will develop this idea around the Formalist notion of *estrangement*, and the poetic notion (coined by the poet Herberto Helder) of *happy mistake*. But this would not be possible at all if I did not view the fields of comparative literature and comparative world literature as moves against subduing textual differences and readings.

Therefore, I propose that this idea must rest upon a comparative relation without which no world, whatever its shape or scale, may indeed be conceived of. World literature must be comparative literature, so as to avoid being just a list or collection of different texts that nothing, not even their dissimilarities, can bring together. This also means that the famous comparative *tertium quid* to which I refer above is not something that may or may not be used, according to circumstances: without it (and without the figure of the interpreter) there is no world, however small, to build or to describe. There is much to be gained from understanding that being able to couple them through similar problem-based approaches is indeed a much more beneficial way to proceed. Actually, a comparative approach is not something that one can add (or not) to world literature, but something upon which the latter must be founded.

This question also invites us to tackle the limits of disciplines and their academic discourses and objectives. Although other kinds of disciplinary discourses (such as sociology, or anthropology) may be associated with comparative literature and world literature, we have to guard against dissolving literary studies and literary approaches into other areas of study. Interdisciplinarity does not mean the end of disciplines – rather, it means the possibility of conceptual debates within one's own discipline as well as between the several disciplines that approach the same object of study from different perspectives.

However, this is one of the main areas of debate in which proponents of the comparative literature approach and the world literature approach not just differ but are often systematically opposed. As the heated discussions on job vacancies between literary studies and cultural studies bore out in the 1970s and 1980s, we should take care not to reproduce the same basic mistakes by endorsing comparative literature and world literature as just a battle for university jobs. Unfortunately, perhaps not enough has been said about this. In consequence, this distorts what should be a debate about concepts and ideas of literature, turning important theoretical differences into mere institutional turf wars.

This is the context that makes me rally to the defence of *textualism* in the context of world literature debates between distant and close reading. I am, of course, not the only one to firmly argue this point. Let me only mention names such as Gayatri Spivak (2003), Emily Apter (2013), Frances Ferguson (2008), or Birgit Neumann (2017), and their debates with scholars such as Pascale Casanova (2004) or Franco Moretti (2003). My position is clear in this respect: if we conceive of close reading not just as a kind of minute discourse analysis, but as also involving structural, thematic, and compositional procedures of the text and the work itself, then both comparative literature and comparative world literature have to predominantly situate themselves within this broad sense of close reading. Other approaches may indeed be used, but from my point of view, they are mainly sociological, and therefore not about literature – as text, composition, and materiality – but about the sociology of literature.

If a question might arise about why I mention comparative literature and comparative world literature as two separate entities, the rationale is as follows. Although world literature has always had to situate itself within comparative literature, it also has had to respond to an *idea of the world* or *worlds*, and therefore to a conceptual inquiry on what this world might mean as a *literary problem*. In other words, world literature must always be comparative,

but not all comparative literature is necessarily world literature. There are possibilities, but there are also limits. This is a point extremely well put by Eric Hayot. It is, as he puts it, "a way of thinking about modern literature that makes the study of the non-West (and a more generally *comparative* literature) necessary, not on the grounds that it is good for you (at the end of the day, no matter how generously articulated, a condescending argument), but on the grounds that not doing so produces bad theories of literature and bad literary history" (2012: 6).

My emphasis on the necessity of textualism as a regulated balance between close and distant reading arises from debates that have arisen around these categories. These mainly relate to broad sociological concerns and their complicated relationship to hermeneutics. I argue that the former must be considered mainly in the context of distant reading procedures, as tools to describe certain types of circulation of texts – and not necessarily as ways of *responding* to texts in their complex textual dimension and their materiality. This could be seen as a reenactment of the theoretical differences between Hans-Robert Jauss's aesthetic of reception and Wolfgang Isers's theory of reception in the 1970s, albeit across a global context. Thus, within the conceptual setting David Damrosch (2003) considers central to world literature – production, translation, and reading and circulation – I would strongly emphasize the value of the hermeneutical dimension of criticism so as to ensure that different forms of close reading may not be erased. Otherwise, we might be confronted with only sociological data – and, worse, some of us might even come to accept the idea that it might be acceptable not to read literature at all in order to talk about literature. We have to be clear about this: textualism is not an option but a foundational feature of world literature. It is also the only way of understanding translation as a mode of reading necessarily related (and not opposed) to estrangement and even alienation (Apter 2013) – what I have come to view, in the wake of the Portuguese poet Herberto Helder, as a "happy mistake" (Buescu 2015), a way of conceiving of untranslatables and mistranslations as productive forms of translatability *lato sensu*.

Textualism is also the cornerstone of comparative literature. This is why I maintain that only a comparative approach may offer an adequate response to the danger pointed out, among others, by Emily Apter when she underlines how world literature might evolve into "a relatively intractable literary monoculture that travels through the world absorbing difference" (2013: 83). This is, of course, akin to the fear of globalization that Spivak (2003) voiced as a danger of a hurried concept of world literature – resting upon a monolithic

idea that "progress" may now take the form of un-differentiation. We may also recall that Damrosch posits, in the first pages of *How to Read World Literature*, that the circulation of world literature is not about one-ness, but about how a work of art *manifests* itself differently in a culture other than the one from which it originated. We might also want to recall Wai Chee Dimock's "Literature for the Planet" (2001), a way of disentangling literature from territorializing procedures. Or, and, going way back, it would also be useful to recall René Étiemble's concept of *comparatisme planétaire* (1988), which he expounded as early as the 1970s.

However, and despite all these *caveats*, and as we come to recognize how sociopolitical and economic agendas also occupy a central point within scientific endeavors and academia itself, we have to be able to devise strong disciplinary responses to such concerns. One response, and from my point of view a decisive one, is to always acknowledge *the point of view* from which world literature or comparative world literature is conceived. By so doing, any monolithic view (which is also an imperialist view) becomes impossible, and our intellectual undertakings have to constantly rethink epistemological differences that cannot and should not be erased. Otherwise, we might find ourselves lost in that *oneworldedness* that critics such as Apter (2006) and Neumann (2017) justly point out as the vantage point toward which a flat concept of world literature might tend. Comparative world literature has to explore a sense of belonging that is, at the same time, a sense of estrangement.

The Case of Portuguese World Literature

In order to contextualize the case of comparative world literature written in Portuguese, I offer a short illustration from a project I have recently completed: the anthology of comparative world literature in Portuguese entitled "Literatura-Mundo: Perspectivas em Português." I have undertaken this work fully aware of the *caveat* with which Apter views the act of "anthologizing" via translation. Notwithstanding Apter's reservations about world literature in translation, we need to value the intellectual curiosity and the literary excitement that drives us to *read*, to have the textual and material experience of a literary text, often times only in translation. Worse, in my view, is to invoke the self-legitimation of not reading, ingrained in the notion that only the original text is adequate. But close to this opt-out choice is the awareness that, if we want to read a text in languages that we do not command, we likely have to do it in English, because often no one has

bothered to translate it into other languages. Also, if we accept the idea, as I do, that translated literature becomes part of the literature into which it has been translated, we have to view translation as a powerful mode of literary tradition and cultural enrichment.

My project arises from within the parameters of these premises. It adopts as one of its epistemological cornerstones that its vantage point is Portugal at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It also stems from the awareness that any other position, be it geographical, political, or historical, would produce different conceptual and hermeneutic objects. This is the reason why the six volumes the project comprises are arranged into three different parts, each organized according to thematic patterns that do not follow national divides, but that create comparative clusters, transversal to different national belongings. Still, because Portugal and Portuguese literature is the position from which this anthology is conceived and organized, the three parts mentioned correspond to specific Portuguese points of entry into comparative world literature. Part One aggregates all literatures written in Portuguese, in different versions of Portuguese from Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia. It also includes some texts written or transcribed in Portuguese-based creoles, which are autonomous languages on their own, from Cape Verde creole to Macau's *patuá* or Malaca's *kristáng*. Part Two takes into account not the language, but the geo-historical and political emplacement of Portugal in Europe. Finally, Part Three encompasses another hermeneutical approach to comparative world literature where historical and chronological organization (e.g., about pre-classical literatures), and thematic comparative clusters – such as the specifically Iberian Al-Andalus case, or the Jewish-sephardic literary traditions – converge. Themes such as "Language and Variation," "Conflict and Violence," "Cartographies of Tradition," or "Literature and the Human Condition," among others, organize each part of this anthology. Despite the planetary scope of Part Three, comparative differences are not flattened or erased. The volumes integrate historical, chronological, national, regional, and thematic concerns and explore a multiplicity of hermeneutic challenges that arise when one deals with the material complexity of texts.

Is such an anthology Eurocentric in the sense that has been given to this concept in recent times? Not in the least, although one of its parts is indeed devoted to Europe. It is, however, an *incomplete* Europe. Part One is devoted to all literatures written in Portuguese around the globe. One can say that Part One deals with "lusophonia." I, however, have some reservations about such a concept. I share João Cézar de Castro Rocha's discomfort with the idea

of lusophonia, mainly because I am aware of how flattening the concept can be (Rocha 2013). To describe with a name in the singular a language in which variation – historical, political, geographical, and cultural – is critical seems a little disconcerting. To quote Rocha:

> There is a double bind that constitutes the lusophone worldview. As a result, in order to renew our understanding of the concept of Lusofonia, a reading of Gregory Bateson's work may be as relevant as a discussion of the latest theoretical trends. Or we may think of Paul Gilroy's usage of the notion of "double consciousness." In both cases, the only way to deal with the difficulties created by the inextricable ambiguity of the predicament implied by the notion of Lusofonia is precisely to talk about it, to translate it into a theoretical discourse.
>
> After all, it is not the language, alone, that unites us, but a critical gaze towards its complex history, plural presents, and plural possibilities.
>
> (2013: 5)

It is precisely for this set of reasons that we need to have the same theoretical gaze toward "Lusophonia" and "Europe" – in both cases, the worst thing we can do is to essentialize these concepts and postulate that they are no longer open to discussion and critical reflection. This is also the reason why I agree with Rocha when he underlines how "an emphasis on comparative approaches may . . . be considered an academic as well as a political statement" (2013: 4). When we speak of lusophonia, we are really speaking of lusophonias, in the plural – much in the same way that, when we speak of European literature, we have to be aware that we are speaking about European literatures, also in the plural. The same reasoning applies to Part Three of the anthology where, *et pour cause*, and, especially, after the advent of what Leo Strauss (1975) termed the first wave of modernity (which is at the base of Hayot's reflection), comparative thematics bring different literary systems together, to stress their diverse forms of comparability (which do not reduce themselves to analogies, similarities, or oppositions).

I also want to stress, in this context, two concepts that, in my view, cannot be ignored in this discussion. On the one hand, the notion of *scale*, as developed by Tanoukhi (2008) in its consequences for conceptualizing world literature; and on the other the notion of *viewpoint*, by no means in itself a new notion, but one whose consequences for our consideration cannot be overlooked. Both notions converge in the epistemological construct of the analytical object, for instance taking into account different source and target languages. Comparative world literature in English does not present the same world picture as comparative world literature in

Portuguese, and the same applies to French, Spanish, Dutch, or even German languages. One item to take into account here is that it might seem that we are dealing only with postcolonial entities, and therefore with European languages as they spread outside Europe. Of course, we are also dealing with these, and, especially, with the post-imperial condition that shapes a great number of literatures around the world. But my argument also applies to languages coming from other parts of the world, e.g., Arabic, Chinese, and a great number of Indian languages.

Current debates on comparative world literature are primarily about different modes of reading. The essential item at stake is not the *nature* of a supposedly different discipline, but the way it promotes and invites different ways to activate what we do with texts. David Damrosch, in his seminal book *What Is World Literature?* (2003), defined world literature as a "mode of reading," a mode of reading that he rightly connects with translation, and, therefore, with the ability of texts to survive (and change) outside their original system of production. There are, however, exchanges between different literary systems that do not depend on translation. Such is the way we must view literatures around the world that use Portuguese as their main literary language. The fact that many countries or regions around the globe produce literatures written in Portuguese must not blind us to the fact that we cannot assimilate different literary systems by conflating them to just a (still Herderian) language criteria. So, Portuguese as a literary language is just one of the factors at hand, and it indeed makes us aware not only of a commonality but also of literary differences between European, South American, African (East and West), or some Asian clusters, which have to be accounted for in our reflection.

Such considerations mold the project I am currently engaged in, and which I briefly described above. It is an *invention and a reorientation of reading* that may be said to have two main characteristics: (i) a comparative approach, according to the characteristics I have outlined earlier; and (ii) a constitutive awareness of what the Russian Formalist Shklovsky termed "defamiliarization" (*ostranenie*). The ability to compare sets of different, even dissimilar texts, from literary systems that do not necessarily belong to the same worldview or cultural/historical context, challenges our established modes of reading. It makes us try to *read otherwise*, and therefore to invent ways of approaching and reading texts that try to respond to strangeness, to defamiliarization, and to what *does not* belong to the same family to begin with.

What I want to underline with these concepts is the fact that, while we usually strive to find the grounds for comparison in similarities and

conformities, we may practice a different mode of reading attuned to what in a given text seems to produce noise, to be "outside the box," to introduce dissimilarities within the text itself, or in its relation to others. So, in a sense, our reading must be aware of "things going wrong" (or gone wrong) in a given text – and in the comparison between different texts. I also argue that only great texts, producing hermeneutical challenges, are able to do this, to startle the reader. On the other hand, books or texts that totally correspond to our initial expectations, simply fulfilling them in the most "exact" way, usually are minutely "right" – and always immediately forgotten.

We have therefore to approach texts that, through their relation to other texts that are dissimilar, show off their nonconformity, and challenge our established ways of reading. What we used to find in similarities we now have to be prepared to accept as dissimilarities, and yet be able to connect them: it is an experience that we might put in relation to what Aby Warburg termed the experience of "good neighbouring" in the constant reinvention of his library (cf. Buescu 2013): something which is never completed, and something which offers challenging new perspectives each time that we move a book from one shelf to another shelf. This invention of reading is akin to that gesture of moving a book from one shelf to another, sometimes one that had never even been considered as a possible shelf to begin with.

The recognition that there are readings that produce and promote "things gone wrong" in a certain text has a bearing on what the Portuguese poet Herberto Helder termed a "happy mistake" ("erro feliz"), as he described the work he did with his translations/versions/reproductions of foreign poetry into Portuguese language. One may, of course, connect this to the theory of misreading developed by Harold Bloom, although in Helder's view (and my own) it is a misreading or a mistake that does not confine itself to the voluntary dialogue (and conflict) between two poets or two textual worlds. We may describe it, more aptly I think, as an idea of *mismatches*, elements that stand out (or are made to stand out) as dissonances in the bodies of texts. A reading from the perspective of a comparative world literature will have to be especially attentive to what stands out an as estranged, risky, or dissonant reading. By so doing, it highlights itself as an *awareness of displacement*, the "happy mistake" that makes the reader want to read again, and to read otherwise. Not that these "mistakes" have to be brought to closure. On the contrary, they have to be understood as a focal hermeneutic point that continues to pulse in the text. As they manifest their strangeness, they also offer the possibility of new readings. The consequences of such readings in

the reconsideration of national canons have, therefore, to be taken into account as well.

This is precisely the case of Portuguese-speaking countries and their literatures, what is usually termed Lusophony or Lusophonia. Outside of Portugal, Portuguese is the official language in a number of countries and/or regions spread throughout almost all continents: Africa (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé e Príncipe, Guiné-Bissau), South America (Brazil), and Asia (Goa in India, Macau in China, and East-Timor). There are also significant Portuguese-speaking migrant communities in many other countries. Around 270 million people have Portuguese as their mother tongue. It is the eighth most spoken language in the world. According to estimates by UNESCO, Portuguese and Spanish are the fastest-growing European languages after English, and Portuguese demonstrates the highest potential for growth as an international language in South America and southern Africa. For these reasons, the study of world literature from a Portuguese-speaking perspective also brings into view a new and broader public, and presents to this wider public numerous texts that have never been translated into Portuguese before. Therefore, the study of comparative world literature from a Portuguese-speaking perspective primarily involves doing so *in* Portuguese. This involves recognizing the array of texts written in Portuguese which stem from very different national and regional literary systems around the globe; and being able to combine them with the collection of texts that are translated into Portuguese. This is a first instance by which we may understand how we are indeed able to "read otherwise": a perspective that, in the project I sketched above, stems from Portugal, but also from the Portuguese language around the globe, and attests to a quite different understanding of comparative world literature than the one we are used to working with – especially an American one, in English.

The Portuguese (or, more accurately, the literatures in Portuguese) case is also a paradigmatic one in the European and planetary context, because it manifests the characteristics of the postcolonial and post-imperial modern literatures, and because throughout Portuguese history migrations/cultural dislocations have occurred that have affected the country's literature. So, the project I sketch in this chapter can also be considered of direct interest to the contemporary postcolonial literary debate.

Here are some of the questions raised by it: Do we read otherwise the literatures of the world if we consider them from a semi-periphery, and not the very center of the literary system? Do we read them otherwise if we use a language which is not standard globalized English? Does post-imperial

Europe and the postcolonial world at large map out different literary world dynamics? These are some of the implications of such reflections, and they correspond to the idea that being aware of literary phenomena that do not share immediate or previous conformities is in itself one of the most interesting issues that comparative world literature brings about.

For these reasons, I consider that the study of comparative world literature from a Portuguese-speaking perspective brings to the current debate an enriched point of view, both European and non-European. This point of observation does not limit itself to the use of a common language, although this is certainly part of it. "In Portuguese" also means that "special mode of reading" that Damrosch considered at the heart of the concept of world literature. The Portuguese (the literatures in Portuguese) case is a paradigmatic one in the European context because (1) it shares in the characteristics of a postcolonial and post-imperial literature (on a par with England, France, Spain, the Netherlands, etc.), and because (2) throughout Portuguese history, displacements, migrations, and cultural and political dislocations have left their traces in its literature, a characteristic the latter shares with literatures of several other European countries, albeit in different ways. I am thinking of Scandinavian, East European countries, or Ireland, to mention just a few. It may now appear that I concern myself too much with a small European country, Portugal. However, I have to acknowledge both its changing historical nature over the centuries, from semi-periphery to center and back; from small to imperially huge, and back to small again; and the fact that it is impossible to consider it without taking into account the Lusophone world that centuries have shaped, changed, and developed. Historically speaking, both the central and the more peripheral literatures in Europe have always been enriched by foreign influence, even as they have contributed to the spread of European languages through the world, hence opening up the possibility of non-European literatures written in European languages. Such is, of course, the case with Portuguese.

Another important feature in this context is how comparative world literature, envisaged from a postcolonial and a post-imperial perspective, enables us to perceive how languages in Europe have always been one of the factors upon which cosmopolitanism has rested, as Thomsen (2008) argued. Migrant literature (of political exiles, refugees, and voluntary migrants) and trauma literature (relating to historical situations such as the Holocaust) lead him to talk about "constellations" of texts in different languages, which directly link the postcolonial and post-imperial contemporary experience of Europe. A thoroughly cosmopolitan view of Europe, in such an argument, must not solely rely upon a cosmopolitanism considered

as touristic traveling, or enlightened thinking. It must also bring into the debate historical as well as political and cultural factors, such as the colonial enterprises, the traveling of European languages to other continents, travel literature under its various forms, or exile and migration movements, which have always been a central feature of Europe.

This revisionist idea of European literatures from a cosmopolitan perspective underlines the innovative character of such perspective, following the grounded proposal for a "planetary approach" that René Étiemble so heartily recommended many decades before its current iteration. Jobim (2017) rightly recalls the modernist Brazilian metaphor of cannibalism to underline how native (although not necessarily "not previously contaminated") cultures and literatures incorporate and change other cultures and literatures. The Brazilian point of view, although being a Portuguese-speaking viewpoint, does not coincide with the European-Portuguese one, nor with the African viewpoints, nor with the Asian ones. From the perspective of comparative world literature, we must acknowledge such literary and linguistic phenomena as exponentially enriching. It is not only postcolonial countries that are enriched by such "cannibalism." It also actively changes and modifies literary cultures of the metropolis.

This being so, and once more speaking from my own viewpoint, a European experience such as the Portuguese one (alongside several others) has to help reflect a non-Eurocentric view of Europe, without denying the historical past. Comparative world literature can offer the conceptual tools and a helpful epistemological context that can revise how we view literatures written in European languages both inside and outside of Europe. And this broader perspective will certainly correspond to a real gain in our inventory of different forms of reading based, as I said, on relationships that do not rest solely upon similarities.

For all the reasons mentioned above, I argue that it is time to move from relative bilateral literary relations (e.g., Portugal and Brazil) to a complementary and changeable map of literatures: in the Portuguese case, the point of view from which my own project stems, Portugal must be seen in the context of other Portuguese-speaking countries; in its European context; and in a trans-historical and transcontinental dimension, thereby also avoiding exclusively national demarcations.

Scaling Comparative World Literature

Let's finally turn to the concepts of *scale* and *viewpoint*, which are at the core of my reflections. In relation to *scale*, comparative world literature may identify

different scales in its approach to literature itself. Jobim (2017: 13) refers to some of these scales as "regional constellations," and indeed I agree that the concept of a *constellation* is appropriate in this context.

First of all, these constellations, as Benjamin has conceived them, rely upon the awareness that one item may take shape as part of more than simply one constellation. We may, therefore, have symbolic communities, linguistic communities, geopolitical communities, and regional communities (Scandinavian literary studies have a strong tradition in this area, but this is just an example). Second, thinking in terms of *constellations* helps to highlight the notion that we are not talking about bilateral relations or comparisons, but interrelations across many constellations. Determining the scale and the scope of an object of analysis through such an approach makes the ground of comparative world literature far richer than Apter and other critics of world literature might imagine.

Nirvana Tanoukhi advocates that world literature has to be conceived through the notion of scale. She moves the debate from the (more geographical, or geopolitical) question of *spaces*, as Franco Moretti argues, to the more cultural question of *literary landscapes* (2008). If one thinks about lusophone literatures from such a perspective, one may easily understand that it is precisely in their non-coincidence with each other that we may find the idea of a comparative world literature in Portuguese. Another interesting consequence is the awareness that different critical landscapes generate different kinds of projects, all intrinsic to Lusophonia, but which stem from different locations and points of view. Diverse focal points make clear both commonalities and divergences, depending on the literary landscape envisioned, whether it is from Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé e Príncipe, or even Goa, Macao, and East Timor.

To give some concrete examples: Angola may be approached from the perspective of Portuguese-speaking Africa; or the Portuguese-speaking world community; or Southern Africa; or transatlantic perspectives; or the triangulation between West Africa, Portugal, and Brazil. If we look instead to Mozambique, the picture (or literary landscape) becomes a different one, as other ties appear to Goa in India, and to South Africa. Again, if we take the Brazilian case, besides the European connection to Portugal, we also have to acknowledge the African connection, especially with Angola and Cape Verde. Further, the geopolitical constellation of South America plays a vital role through a translinguistic exchange between Portuguese and Spanish, and, of course, the connection to the native communities, their cultures, and their dialogues as well. The same is true for other regions already inhabited

by Indigenous people prior to the colonization: Angola, Mozambique, Macao, and East Timor.

When we become aware of such shifting scales, we can look anew at how the strategies of close and distant reading relate to them. Close in relation to what? Distant from whom? Scale also determines how close (and how far away from) you can get to texts themselves. Whatever constellation, literary landscape, and scale we may use for our approach, one should never get too far away from texts – unless one does consider that comparative and world literature are, or must be, two different disciplines, driven by opposing epistemological concerns. Textualism is indeed a challenge, if taken from a comparative perspective. If taken from a comparative world literature perspective, the challenge intensifies.That is why it is important to understand that comparative world literature does not equate to "global literature" or "oneworldedness" (Apter 2013) and that its different segmentations combine across divergent scales to put "major" and "minor" literatures, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense, in quite different and unexpected locations. Indeed, a "minor literature" may find, through the lens of comparative world literature, a major place, disproportionate to its peripheral historical and geopolitical location. To put it in Deleuze and Guattari's words: "'minor' no longer characterizes certain literatures, but describes the revolutionary conditions of any literature within what we call the great (or established)" (Deleuze, Guttari, and Brinkley 1983: 18). Interestingly, the editor of Deleuze and Guattari's text, Robert Brinkley, reminds us, in a metaphor that I find all too appropriate to my approach here, that the idea of the rhizome, or burrow, is firmly anchored in the awareness that there are many doors to enter *The Castle*. He adds:

> Among these entrances, none seems privileged; no sign over the entrances announces that this is the way in. The reader of Kafka's work will choose an opening and map the passage he finds himself following. The map will change if a different entrance is chosen. (14)

It is this intrinsically changing literary, politic, and symbolic "map" that becomes a useful tool to undermine concepts such as "global literature," or "oneworldedness." Spivak's concept of "planetary imagination" comes to mind. But, as I stated before, Etiemble himself had previously insisted on the idea of planetarity and the concept of "planetary awareness" (1975; 1988) in order to enhance the *plurality* of literatures and subsequent literary problems around the world. Neumann and Rippi also make the same point, when she proposes "acknowledging the plurality of worlds that

world literature brings into being, worlds that are made rather than given and that may clash and grapple with each other" (2017: 3) – this being precisely the point that Deleuze and Guattari make about Kafka.

So, my concluding remarks, specifically concerning Portuguese-speaking literatures from a planetary point of view, underline the principle of estrangement and non-concordance that I argued above. Second, and even if Eric Hayot (2012) stresses how modern Europe must be viewed as the very center of the most important literary steps taken, I would like to add that modern Europe (indeed, that which constitutes modern Europe) is precisely the systematic non-encapsulation in itself. Therefore, the modern West (modern Europe) is crucially built upon the non-West. Literatures written in Portuguese around the world, but also literatures written in other European languages precisely show how, at the center of any literary system, "minor" literatures add, dissolve, reshuffle what we traditionally used to view as stable and "pure" (that is, strictly "European") forms, thematics, circulation, textualities.

Lastly, any literary discipline, and more so comparative world literature, has to encompass different maps, literary landscapes, and scales that support the plurality of worlds. Surely, a world seen from a Portuguese-speaking focal point will not coincide with a French-speaking or a Spanish-speaking one. Must we then build a hierarchy of literary powers centered in Paris such as Pascale Casanova famously proposed? Who wins the contest? My view is that, given the myriad scales and locations of comparative world literature, we do not have to adopt such a reductive one-world approach. We have had our positivistic moments in literary studies. It is high time we acknowledge and celebrate its plural and worldly riches.

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17

Africa and World Literature

UZOMA ESONWANNE

World literature assumed a new identity as it entered the new millennium. Initially, it had been a man's dream of transnational commerce in literary culture. Then it began to imagine itself a global "republic" of literary value administered from a metropolitan center in Western Europe (Casanova 2007). Now it prefers to see itself as a corpus of peripatetic cultural texts held together by protocols "of circulation and of reading" (Damrosch 2003: 4–5). So world literature knows itself, but what of "Africa"? What is this Africa, and into what role – a regional supplement (Hayot 2012: 6) or a constitutive agent – would the copula deliver it? Focusing on literary anthologies, the primary instrument of its pedagogical practice, I argue that, its new identity notwithstanding, world literature retains the view of Africa as a source of regional works that would supplement an already established archive of global cultural texts. Against this view, I argue that the relationship between Africa and world literature needs to be recalibrated by adopting strategies that recognize that Africa is *an agent* in the constitution and interpretation of the archive of global cultural texts we call world literature. To understand why this shift is necessary, I begin by exploring the "Africa" that "and" yokes with world literature in our title.

What "Africa"?

Two anecdotes suggest why we need to set out in advance just what relationship that word, "and," signifies when it is nested between the words "Africa" and "world literature." It was 1974, and Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist, was walking to his car in a parking lot at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, when he ran into "an older man." The man tried to make small talk. Was he a student, he asked? On learning that Achebe was "a teacher" of African literature, the man, who had "never thought of Africa as having that kind of stuff," confessed to being surprised. Probably knowing

from past experience where such conversations often lead, Achebe ended the discussion by hastening his pace (Achebe 1989: 1–2). Fifteen years later, in 1989, Achebe found himself in the company of "bankers and economists," all of whom had gathered in Paris for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conference. Convened to discuss the economic crisis then unfolding across the continent, the conference soon focused on the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), a raft of "free-market economic policies" about whose merits they could not reach a consensus. The governor of the Central Bank of Kenya, the only other African there, was skeptical about the policies but, badly outnumbered by his non-African peers, his views went unheeded. Then, perhaps because he was a writer rather than banker or an economist, Achebe intervened. The deliberations were "a *fiction workshop*," he declared. All that the majority was doing was blithely brewing "new drugs and feeding them to a bunch of laboratory guinea pigs and hoping for the best." "I have news for you," he continued. "Africa is not fiction. Africa is people, real people. Have you thought of that? . . . *really* thought, of Africa as people?" (Achebe 2009: 155–57).

Leaving aside the mixed metaphor, we can see that these anecdotes recall encounters with "Africa." The question is, what Africa? In Amherst, "Africa" emerges in the context of a chance encounter between "strangers," in Paris in the context of a *palava* between "experts." In both cases, it designates a place, but one defined by a lack that either functions as a prosthesis or as an enabling charter. As a place, whose distinction is that it lacks literary culture, the "Africa" Achebe encounters in Amherst is a prosthetic device by which his acquaintance grasps the space he inhabits in the world as a particular kind of place, and knows himself as a privileged resident of that place. In Paris, "Africa" is the *terra nullius* onto whose unpeopled landscape OECD experts impose an economic policy without fear of dissent. In neither of these anecdotes is "Africa" figured as an interlocutor with whom one should properly engage. Could the "Africa" that the copula wishes to deliver into a relationship with world literature be one of these?

Since Achebe recalls the first anecdote in "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," the Chancellor's Lecture he gave at the University of Massachusetts in 1975, we can surmise that his intervention in the 1989 conference grew out of the resolve he had made during his 1975 lecture to fight rather than flee situations in which he found himself confronting an Africa that diverged so profoundly from his. Recall that, in that lecture, he claims to have been tempted to persuade his audience that it had more to gain if it abandoned the prejudice that colors its perception of Africa

and substituted a view of Africa as "a continent of people . . . just people," but had resisted the temptation (Achebe 1989: 18). When, in Paris, Achebe declared that "Africa is people," he was reiterating that earlier proposition. He was also echoing Frantz Fanon's remark at the end of *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008): "I, a man of color, want but one thing: May man never be instrumentalized" (206). Conrad, the stranger Achebe encountered at Amherst, the OECD experts: for such people, "Africa" is always both "not x" and *for* something other than itself.

Is this the "Africa" that our titular "and" wishes to bind into a relationship with world literature? I would like to answer this question by focusing on literary anthologies and theory, these being the two mutually entangled sites of the practice of world Literature. With regard to world literature anthologies, I ask: On the basis of what principles are literary works curated for inclusion? How might these principles affect their conception of Africa and the texts they select, and how do they conceive of the relationship between such texts? As for theory, I ask how particular theoretical propositions about world literature engage (or overlook) issues relevant to African letters and explore challenges that peculiar dimensions of literary and cultural practices in Africa open up in theory.

Regional Supplement

To understand the relationship between Africa and World Literature, one must not forget that anthologies of World Literature are works of literary scholarship. Nor should one forget that the bulk of this scholarship is conducted in French and English, the languages "'of Racine'" and "'of Shakespeare'" (Casanova 2007: 17–18) in which the bulk of African texts that find their way into literary anthologies are composed. In practice, this means that for Africa and African literary works access to the domain of world literature is regulated in accordance with the terms and conditions established by publishing houses and editors located elsewhere – particularly, "Paris . . . the capital of the literary world" (24), London, and now New York. Because these houses and editors exercise entrepreneurial control over the production of literary anthologies; because the authority they exercise accrues to them from "the language of literature" rather than from "small" European languages (18) or non-European languages at farthest provinces of the literary world; and, finally, because until quite recently virtually none of the intellectuals involved in the production of these anthologies was a specialist in African letters: hardly any work by African authors,

and hardly any work composed in non-Europhone African languages, found its way into anthologies of World Literature.

Consider *Masterpieces of the World's Literature: Ancient and Modern*, Volume II (1898). Harry Thurston Peck, the editor, includes several Ancient Egyptian Love-Songs and excerpts from Saint Augustine's *The Confessions*, and Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, but recognizes only Schreiner's work as having something to do with Africa. Yet, writing as if Peck actually read "the entire mass of existing literature belonging to every language and to every period" before curating his anthology, John Russell Young claimed that Peck selected works by writers who stood "out as pre-eminent and permanently representative in every department of letters" (1898: vii). As with all anthologists, Peck must have made his choices from the works that had come to his notice, just as to this day anthologists must do. Indeed, this is how we can make sense of the outsized role that Africanist discourse, particularly in works by Europeans and Americans such as Conrad and Hemingway, has played in mediating between Africa and world literature. But Africanist mediation does not quite explain why, until the late twentieth century, curators of literary anthologies continued to overlook works by H. I. E. Dhlomo and Sol Plaatje, Naguib Mahfouz and Léopold Sédar Senghor, Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe, Ousmane Sembene and Tayeb Salih, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Okot p'Bitek. The reason, I think, is that their writing, like *Giambatista Viko* (1975), Mbwil a Mbang Ngal's novel, may have failed to conform to Western presuppositions about Africa and to satisfy "local" Western "needs" (Damrosch 2003: 117). If so, we can now see why the decision by Sarah Lawall, the editor of *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces* (Lalwall and Mack 1995; hereafter abbreviated *NAWM*), to expand the anthology's content by including oral texts in translation must have seemed quite groundbreaking (Damrosch 2003: 129–30). Since 2002, readers who have been so inclined have been able to read epics such as *Son–Jara*, *Gilgamesh*, and *The Iliad* alongside each other, and the *Kebra Nagast* of Ethiopia and "Malagasy Wisdom Poetry" have joined Ancient Egyptian love poetry, the *Stela of Taimhotep*, correspondence by Chief Machemba and excerpts from works by contemporary African authors in the pages of *The Norton Anthology of World Literature* (2018; hereafter abbreviated *NAWL*) and *Literatures of Asia, Africa, and Latin America* (1999), an even more accommodating anthology.

These, undoubtedly, are welcome developments. One applauds them, particularly because they challenge the literary boundaries within which editors, publishers, and readers, both casual and professional, have hitherto

confined literary and cultural works. Given the fact that Asian letters inspired Goethe to formulate the notion of *Weltliteratur*, it should never have been possible for anyone to speak of world literature as if it were simply coextensive with European and American literatures. Yet several did, and the legacy of that practice haunts world literature to this day (Ibironke 2015: 29–31). On the basis of what principles should World Literature construct frameworks for classifying its content, and how should it characterize relations between texts that intervene in epochal historical processes such as colonialism? As an examination of *NAWL* shows, this question continues to haunt the field.

In *Volume F*, material pertaining to Africa appears in three parts: in "Modernity and Modernism, 1900–1945," Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; in "Postwar and Postcolonial Literature, 1945–1968," short fiction (Doris Lessing, Achebe, and Naguib Mahfouz); and in "Contemporary World Literature, Drama (Wole Soyinka), and Short Fiction" (Ama Ata Aidoo, Nawal el-Saadawi, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Bessie Head). In the Introduction to "Modernity and Modernism, 1900–1945," we learn that modernism, a response to the rapid and radical changes in life experience unleashed by modern technologies, inaugurated the "literary experimentation" that yoked together the multiple crises of "reason," politics, and "representation" that, since the late nineteenth century, have put our faith in human cognition and in aesthetic orthodoxy in question. Furthermore, we also learn that modernist experimentations were directed at the formal and thematic dimensions of the literary work; that *Heart of Darkness*, a narrative whose innovations include "delayed coding" and ambiguous symbolization, denounces "European imperialism in Africa" but not British imperialism; and that, along with Aimé Césaire, Senghor was a leader of the Négritude Movement that celebrated "the culture of Africa and the African diaspora" and "provided intellectual support and political leadership for decolonization movements " (*NAWL*: 9–16). However, upon turning to the contents of this part, we find Conrad's fiction (*Heart of Darkness*) and Césaire's poetry (excerpts from *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*), but not works by African modernists that respond to Conrad's literary innovations. As a consequence of this oversight, readers unfamiliar with African literature may conclude either that the crisis that modernization unleashed in Africa was so minimal that African writers did not bother to take it up or that, if it was so profound that they did take it up, they did so in prose essays that focused exclusively on racism in Conrad's novella.

Neither of these conclusions can withstand scrutiny. This is because we can only make sense of contemporary Africa, of the constitution of its peoples

as colonial subjects, and of the emergence of literary and cultural practices now readily associated with modernity, only if we grasp these developments as the effects of modernization facilitated by European colonialism. As Simon Gikandi puts it, modernity is the "condition of possibility" of African fiction (2007: 5). "In the works of the African avant-garde," he writes, "the experience of crisis would be used to disturb the old order of society, and above all, of art and culture" (16–17). But the iconoclastic value of "the experience of crisis" was not directed exclusively against "the old order" of African society and its cultural norms and practices. As Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* ([1966] 2003) shows, it also took direct aim at racist discourse in celebrated texts in the English literary canon (*Othello* and *Heart of Darkness*) and at decolonizing nativism. Conrad's innovative narrative techniques and Marlow's ambivalent view of Africans are frequently advanced in mitigation of Achebe's critique. Thus, we are advised not to take Marlow's "distant and cruelly patronizing" "words and behavior" too much to heart because he "also recognizes his 'kinship' with the Africans " (*NAWL*: 16–17). To show why this counsel is deeply flawed and why, in fact, creating space for *Season* in the modernist rubric of world literature may be a far more effective strategy for taking the full measure of Conrad's Africa, I now turn, briefly, to Salih's novel.

As we shall see, the decolonial critique in *Season* is aimed at colonialism, nativism, *and* bourgeois liberalism. Insofar as he embodies them, Salih's frame narrator, a literary scholar who spent "three years delving into the life of an obscure English poet" (2003: 9), is the primary focus of that critique. Like Mustafa Sa'eed, the narrator and protagonist of the embedded narrative – "long story" (19) about his journey from The Sudan to the "land 'whose fishes dies of the cold'" (1) – he has been a colonial migrant. However, unlike Mustafa, his is a recent migration. Thus, when he encounters Mustafa he still feels deeply alienated from his community and his sense of self is profoundly fractured. Imagining that he could recuperate the organic and coherent self he had possessed before his travels, he tries to reintegrate himself into the network of kin relations and communal institutions and practices in his village by the Nile. By doing so, he assumes, he would acquire "a sense of stability" and feel himself a "seed sown in a field" rather than "a stone thrown into the water" (5). He suspects that his desire is "strange" (5). He knows, after all, that modernity has not spared his "village" on the bank of the Nile any more than it has him. He is aware that its technologies – literary scholarship (9), steamers that ply the Nile, and water "pumps" that multiply the productivity of hundreds of "water-wheels" (4) – have irreversibly altered his consciousness and the social mores of his community. Still, he heedlessly persists. Only when Hosna Bint Mahmoud,

Mustafa's young widow, murders Wad Rayyes, the lecherous gerontocrat her father compels her to marry, and then commits suicide, does he begin to relent. But his change of heart comes too late for her. As her guardian, he could have protected her by marrying her. But neither his own desire nor social pressure could persuade him to do so. Poised between "action and restraint" (93) in their encounters, possibly because, as Mahjoub, president of the Agricultural Project Committee, scornfully noted, he would not discharge his responsibility by taking her as a "second" wife (103). Much as Mahjoub's scorn compelled him to admit to himself that he loved her and to realize that, like everyone in his village, he was vulnerable to "the germ of contagion that oozes from the body of the universe" (104), it failed to inspire him to act in her behalf. In the end, her death inspires him to resolve to "choose life" and "discharge" his "duties" rather than to seek escape in the waters of the Nile (168), thus breaking the ethical impasse into which his liberal impulses and nativist sentiments had plunged him. That in *Season* as in the postcolony it is *women* and their offspring, often the people who are most vulnerable to violence triggered by the conflict between these ideologies, who set the narrator on the path toward a resolution of his ontological crisis is perhaps the most profound irony of the narrator's memoir.

In Mustafa, Salih mounts a direct critique of Conrad. Edward W. Said has noted that Mustafa reverses what Kurtz "does (and is)" (1993: 30). But it is in Salih's narratology, rather than this evocation of Kurtz, that best dramatizes how *Season* "disturbs" Conrad's modernist "art." A thinking machine, Mustafa is neither culture hero nor reliable narrator. On the contrary, he invites skepticism: "I don't ask you to believe what I tell you. You are entitled to wonder and to doubt – you're free" (21). And, were one tempted not to heed his advice, he quickly dispels that temptation. Catachrestic formulations are one of his favorites strategies for securing "doubt" and, thus, subverting his own reliability. On his way to Cairo, he remembers thinking of his hometown in The Sudan as "some mountain on which I had pitched my tent and in the morning I had taken up the pegs, saddled my camel and continued my travels" (24). Cairo, "that large mountain to which" his "camel" bore him, became "a European woman just like Mrs. Robinson," his host in the city (25). And London, where several women fell prey to his verbal guile, was transformed "into a woman" into whose "summit" he anticipates pitching his "tent" (39). Just twelve when the train took him to the Robinsons in Cairo, Mustafa was a child with an adult imagination. Converting the train journey into "a sacralized

hegira" (Said 1993: 211), he became the camel-riding nomad traversing arid, mountainous landscapes while his mind, possibly rendered febrile by the soaring heat of his fantasy, transformed all it encountered, including Mrs. Robinson's maternal embrace and Isabella Seymour's pathetic primitivism, into vivid topographia, the idiom in which he preferred to represent his destructive libidinal impulses. What is most noteworthy about Mustafa's narration, however, is neither its content nor the colorful idiom in which he couches his thoughts. Rather, it is his habit of drawing attention to representation itself: "My storehouse of hackneyed phrases is inexhaustible," he twice declares on recalling his victims (35, 30). With such metanarrative commentary, he puts his own conduct under scrutiny, thus arresting the reader's credulity and deepening skepticism of his own reliability as narrator of his memoir. In *Culture and Imperialism* Said attributes Salih's "articulation of some of the discrepancies and their imagined consequences muffled by Conrad's majestic prose" in *Heart of Darkness* to Mustafa's migrations "from north to south, and from south to north" (1993: 211–12). To this I would add that, because Salih's narrative technique is also an implicit critique of Conrad's narrative experimentation, we can offer readers of anthologies of world literature a full account of Conrad's Africa only when *avant-garde* African fiction (such as Salih's novel) become integral to our understanding of "Modernity and Modernism."

"There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism": in this aphoristic thesis, Walter Benjamin sums up the argument above (1985: 256). But, drawing on Elaine Scarry, I would now like to add that it is in how we encounter the documents of civilization that we locate ourselves in history. In *The Body in Pain* (1985), Scarry declares that "To have pain is to have *certainty*; to hear about pain is to have *doubt*" (13). Paraphrasing her I suggest that, with regard to *Heart of Darkness*, *certainty* and *doubt* structure readers' attitudes of ambivalence toward imperialism that prompts Conrad to represent Africa "as inhuman, scary because it *may not be*" (Spivak 2003: 115–16, #7; emphasis mine). For those that Conrad's novella casts in the role of "barbarians," to read Marlow's tale is to have pain rather than to "hear about" it. When criticism then abstracts that role as metaphor, whatever it designates as the tenor – the prehistoric, the inhuman, or distant territories of the mind awaiting conquest (Mudimbe 1994: 30; see also Arendt 1966: 176–77) – only gives expression to its own doubt. What could it possibly mean for such criticism to invite readers, particularly Africans who in this context may read "in pain," to discern in Conrad's "delayed coding" and Marlow's verbal ambiguities evidence exculpating Conrad for her

debasement? Is issuing invitation not also asking such readers to doubt their pain as if they, too, were only hearing "about" it?

Invitations of this kind assume that *all* readers respond to Conrad's ideological vacillations in exactly the same way. If they do not, it is because they are either unaware of those vacillations or, being aware, still impeded from responding as all should by a historical consciousness. But underpinning this view are several unstated and unexamined assumptions. One is that literary experience is unique and powerful, so much so that, in reading, it overrides (or should override) the reader's consciousness of herself as a historical subject. Second is that literary and historical experiences belong to different but comparable scales of value in which the literary always supersedes the historical. Sadly, the postulate of the reader as subject whose consciousness could transcend history is belied by evidence. Consider two: first, Teju Cole's inability to forget that "the benevolent, rheumy-eyed" Naipaul with whom he established a sense of literary kinship at a "dinner party" in 2014 (17) is the same man who had been so "fond of the word 'nigger,' so aggressive in his lack of sympathy toward Africa, so brutal in his treatment of women" (Cole 2016: 23); second, African literary history, which discloses how, after the waning of realism, African writers from Mia Couto (*Voices Made Night*, 1990) and Teju Cole (*Every Day Is For the Thief*, 2007) to Nnedi Okorafor (*Who Fears Death*, 2010) and Yaa Gyasi (*Homecoming*, 2016) have continued to experiment with cosmopolitan and metaphysical ways of being worldly that contradict and exceed positions prescribed for Africa. I read this evidence as refutation of the assumptions about readers and readings of Africa in modernist works and, therefore, as impediments to the relationship between Africa and world literature that curators of anthologies cannot ignore.

Translation

I would also like to suggest that translation is another impediment to the cultivation of that relationship. Long before decolonization and the growth of Europhone African literatures in the late twentieth century, translation had been a matter of some importance for Christian missionaries who wished to make "the Good Book" available to their African converts. With decolonization came a growing investment in translations, mostly of literary works (poetry, prose fiction, and drama) that were of interest to English- and French-speaking intellectuals. Translations of Arabic and other African language works were few and very far between, the enterprising initiatives of

figures like Wole Soyinka notwithstanding. Thus, it is that in 1978 when he surveyed Africa's cultural landscape for African literary and oral works of art one could integrate into a course on World Literature, Robert J. Clements found little. African novels, which he considered derivative and "local" and yet to meet the threshold of literary value – "international acclaim and enduring values" – on the basis of which an instructor might include them in a course on world literature, would not do. Neither would African oral traditions and literary works in "minor African" languages which were yet to be translated into "a more available language." Until these works were translated, he suggested, Africa's contribution to a pedagogy of world literature would remain "modest but useful" (Clements 1978: 32–33).

Clements may have had a point. Consider the fact that it was not until the closing decades of the twentieth century that literary curators began making room in anthologies of world literature for African oral texts in translation. In 1898 Peck included "Ancient Egyptian Love Songs" in his anthology, but more translations of African oral discourse became available only in the 1990s when Norton published *Son–Jara* in Maynard Mack's *NAWM* (1997) and Prentice Hall followed suit with African creation myths, stories, songs, and epics in Barnstone and Barnstone's *Literatures of Asia, Africa, and Latin America* (1999). Even then, by 2002 when Norton substituted *Literature* for *Masterpieces* in its title and added more oral texts from the non-Western world, its editors were still so concerned about the reception these texts would be accorded that they thought it necessary to reassure their readers:

> In altering the current title to *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, we do not abandon the anthology's focus on major works of literature or a belief that these works especially repay close study. It is their consummate artistry, their ability to express complex signifying structures, that gives access to multiple dimensions of meaning, meanings that are always rooted in a specific setting and cultural tradition but that further constitute, upon comparison, a thought-provoking set of perspectives on the varieties of human experience. (NAWL 2002: xxiii).

Thus did the capacity to "repay close study," a measure of artistic excellence that Western epics from Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* to Milton's *Paradise Lost* have presumably met, become the term by which a translation of *Son–Jara* could secure inclusion in the anthology. In other words, the apologia implies that its measure of artistic excellence for all epics is commensurable: the change to its title notwithstanding, in the Norton anthology, all texts are equally world *literature* because, submitted to textual scrutiny, they

yield the same intellectual and aesthetic pleasures. If we set aside the fact that literariness in Homer's epics is anachronistic, since it has emerged as a measure of artistic excellence only in modern times, we could make a strong case for the proposition that the capacity to "repay close study" is a universal methodological value. But we do not encounter *Son-Jara* in the Norton anthology as we do *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. If we encounter in the latter a literariness that repays "close study," it is only because time obliges us to do so. Lost to time, the poetics of oral performance in Greek epics can only be inferred through close reading of literary translations that time has bequeathed to posterity. That is why we see the satisfactions such translations afford us as a matter of expedience. Not so the *Son-Jara* we encounter in the same anthology. As an effect of the translation of the verbal component of a living epic, this *Son–Jara* may "repay close study," but its capacity to do so cannot be the measure by which we can make any meaningful comparison between the Mande and Greek epics or set up a literary canon in which we designate one "minor" and another "major." To integrate translations of *Son-Jara* into a canon of world literature that preserves these hierarchies may reassure some readers, but in doing so, it risks misleading them. As an extant oral epic, *Son-Jara* solicits a methodology that recognizes its status as an audiovisual and kinaesthetic experience, one that is informed by knowledge of the poetics of Mande orality and epic poetry, the conventions of Mande musicology, and the dramaturgy of Mande (African) performance. By forgetting that what translation produces is not an audiovisual and kinesthetic *experience* as a performance of the Mande epic is, readers who read translations of *Son-Jara* as they would *The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*, and *Paradise Lost* do them an injustice. Therefore, little is to be gained from treating translations of *Son–Jara* as if they were simply an African instance of a global *literary* art. Ultimately, no one who genuinely seeks the aesthetic pleasures that immersion in the heritage of world literature and culture provides is likely to require the prosthetic service of canonical distinctions.

Nor is this all. That *Son-Jara* is a *living* work, one that is constantly being modified in performance, means that any translation that is anthologized must inevitably be considered provisional. To understand why, consider the fact that, at least since 1891, *Son-Jara* has been repeatedly transcribed and translated into diverse literary genres. French colonists, Islamic clerics, folklorists, anthropologists, linguists, cultural nationalists, literary pedagogues, and feminists: these have commissioned and pressed translations of *Son-Jara* into service for diverse and, sometimes, even competing political, ideological, pedagogical, and cultural interests (Bulman 2004: 232–45). Given this history, we can hardly discount the probability that these translations are colored by these interests. Ivor Wilks

suggests why this may be so. Referring to song, one of the three modes (the other two are speech and recitation) in which *jeli* (griot) vocalize the epic, he shows how such coloring occurs. Contrary to those who may have thought that the epic consists of fixed lines, he notes that, in response to a specific patron, the *jeli* may modify the text of a song with improvisation that has been inspired by other oral genres such as "hunters' songs, local 'clan' traditions, or Muslim writings." He cites as an example of this compositional process Ibrahima Kanté's interjection of the names of ministerial figures in a performance of the epic (Wilks 1999: 28). But he also cites another example of textual modification that reminds us not only that the *jeli* are a generative force in the production of the song texts of *Son-Jara* but also that, as a consequence, the content of their song texts is unstable and variable. The significance of this variability and instability is borne out by the example of "The Bow," an epithet that *jeli* use for Son-Jara on different occasions:

O bara kala ta le,	A, a, bara kala ta le,
Simbon o bara kala ta le.	Simbon o bara kala ta le.
Sugutigi, Simbon le, bara ka la ta le.	Konte-muso, de mago-nya-mogo bara ka la ta le.
Jeli-ni-numulu-mara-baga bara kala ta le . . .	Jeli-ni-numulu-ma-ba' bara kala ta le . . .

In the first, Son-Jara is identified by a vocation: "Sugutigi, Simbon le, bara ka la ta le" ("The master hunter, the Simbon, [who] took up his bow"). In the second, he is identified by a specific act: "Konte-muso, de mago-nya-mogo bara ka la ta le" – "The protector of the Konte woman took up his bow" (Wilks 1999: 29). Obviously, Ibrahima Kanté's Son-Jara can be both. However, the fact that he uses the epithets on different occasions suggests that Son-Jara could not be "Sugutigi, Simbon le" and "Konte-muso, de mago-nya-mogo" in the same rendition of "The Bow." If so, we must ask: under what circumstances does the *jeli* decide which of these epithets is suitable in a performance, and how might his choice affect our understanding of Son-Jara's role as epic hero and the epic as a whole? These questions are significant because they suggest that the text of *Son-Jara*, like oral texts in general, may be more malleable and contingent than literary scholars are willing to allow.

Further compounding the difficulty posed by the textual instability of *Son-Jara* are the additional problems of translatability and of the orientation of translation. How does one translate Maninka terms for which "ideal" English equivalents are unavailable, David C. Conrad (2004: xxxvi) appears to have asked himself when

he was translating the version of *Son-Jara* he recorded in Guinea? One simply retains and annotates them, as he does in his translation of the genealogy with which Tassey Condé begins his recitation:

> We and the Americans are descendants of Isiaaka. (Naamu)
> The Americans have as much power as any Condé,
> *kamalen*. (Naamu)
> The only difference is that they have a *dalilu* that we
> do not have. (Naamu)
> (2004: 4)

Conrad glosses *kamalen* and *dalilu*, respectively, as "Worthy, able young men in their prime" and "Magic, secret, or occult power; in everyday use, any means used to achieve a goal" (4). However, because he offers the gloss as a way of conveying a sense of the meaning of the terms in Maninka rather than suggesting that his gloss actually conveys the "nuances" of their meanings in Maninka (xxxvi), Conrad avoids the conceit that translation, including his 2016 prose translation from which Norton extracted episodes anthologized in 2018, could "zoom over the speed bumps of untranslatability" (Apter 2013: 3) as Johnson appears to think he could (1986: 93/2003: 91).

As for the problem of orientation, let us consider three English translations of Son-Jara's "eulogy" in a 1968 recitation by Ban Sumana Sisókó, two by John William Johnson, and one by Ivor Wilks. Johnson's transcript of Sisókó's recitation (1986: 17) appears in the column to the right.

Fa–Digi Sisókó	Wilks (1999: 27)	Johnson (1986: 17)	Johnson (1986: 17/ 2003: 19)
Minw bè sènè kè, I ka sènè kè! Minw bè jago kè, I ka jago kè! Minw bè kèlè kè, I ka kele kè! Jata ye kèlè kè!	Those who farm, Let them farm. Those who trade, Let them trade. Those who fight, Let them fight. Jata fought.	Those who would farm, Let them farm! Those who would trade, Let them trade! Those who would do battle, Let them battle! It was battling that Sunjata did!	Those who would farm the land, Let them deal in agriculture! Those who would trade in wares, Let them deal in commerce! Those who would go forth to battle, Let them deal in warfare! Jata dealt in warfare!

Johnson and Wilks base their translations on the transcript that appears in Johnson's *The Epic of Son-Jara: A West African Tradition* (1986). Johnson reproduces that initial (1986) translation in the third edition of *The Epic of Son-Jara* (2003), but not in 1999 when, in an essay published in the same volume as Wilks, he quotes it as an illustration of the dubious ethics of Son-Jara (1986: 17). Wilks describes his translation as "sparser" (27) than Johnson's 1986 translation. Indeed, it is. However, it is barely more so than Johnson's 1999 translation, which appears in *In Search of Sunjata* (1999), the same volume in which Wilks's essay does.

Thus, on a superficial level we could conclude that the translations produced by an individual scholar could vary as much as those produced by several. On closer examination, however, we can discern substantive differences between Johnson's and Wilks's translations. If, unlike his 1986 translation, Johnson's 1999 version is much more compact and less expository, its style remains broadly consistent with its precursor's. Cast in the subjunctive, both seem intent on conveying a sense of the alternative occupational vocations available to the Mande (1986: 18). Wilks's style, by contrast, is declarative, possibly because his focus is as much on the "melodic" dimension of Sisókó's lexia as it may have been on its economy (Wilks 1999: 27). Whatever the reason for this difference in style, it seems that what distinguishes the translations is more their tone than their verbal economy. According to Walter Benjamin, "The task of the translator consists in finding the particular intention toward the target language which produces in that language the echo of the original" (1996: 258). Could tone be where Johnson and Wilks fulfill their task as translators? Whatever felicities their translations may offer, what they cannot conceal is the fact that the echoes of Son-Jara's eulogy that we discern in their work emerge from a style oriented *toward* English. This is partly why we may want to be a bit circumspect about the efficacy of "close study" as a methodology for obtaining from *Son-Jara* a pleasurable experience similar to what *The Odyssey* might yield.

Similar circumspection may also be needed in any anthology that seeks to recommend African literary works in translation on the grounds that they repay "close study." If, as Mustafa Ettobi shows, linguistic differences as well as issues of political status often lead to mistranslations of colloquial and idiomatic speech, songs, and sayings in Arabic fiction, such as those by Najïb Mahfüz and Muhammad Shükri (Ettobi 2017: 105–14), how could a reader find in their ability to repay textual analysis a satisfactory legitimation for their status as world literature? What is such study to make of *Song of Lawino* (1966), the much-altered English translation of *Wa per*

Lawino that garnered Okot p'Bitek considerable global attention and prestige (Gikandi 2016: 1196)? Should an anthology invite readers to read *Wa per Lawino*, p'Bitek's Acholi original; *Song of Lawino*; or *Omulanga gwa Lawino*, the much-belated Luganda translation that is based on *Song of Lawino*; or all three? And what of Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre*? Which textual version would provide adequate recompense to the reader who submits it to textual scrutiny: the French original; *So Long a Letter*, the English version for which Bâ received global acclaim, in part, because the phrase "Instrument *unique* de relation et de culture . . . de recevoir" was mistranslated (Warner 2016: 1239); *Bataaxal bu gudde nii* (2007), the Wollof translation that attempts to restore the meaning of the French original; or all three? All of these cases further reinforce the need for circumspection about the bases on which world literature seeks to legitimate African writing in its pedagogy.

So legitimating African literary and oral texts is hardly all that world literature must now look into. It must also ask how we should read these texts *as* world literature. Doing so makes demands on readers that require that they do more than enter into "*a form of detached engagement*" with their worlds (Damrosch 2009: 281) or isolate and "focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems" (Moretti 2009: 49–50). If their worlds, though distant, are nonetheless integrated into the world of global capitalism; and if focusing on units larger or smaller than the African text means clutching at a dimension as the proverbial blind man clutches at an elephant's tail; then the reader of Africa in World Literature must strive to inhabit its world, even if only imaginatively. Undoubtedly doing so is likely to be very unsettling. But so are skydiving and bungee-jumping, two pursuits that could cause the body more pain than *Son-Jara* could ever cause the intellect. And the latter is more likely to enrich the intellect than the former could the body.

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18

Literary Revolution: Ireland and the World

MARGARET KELLEHER

Introduction: "The Irish Paradigm"

The 1999 publication of Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* (translation, 2004) accorded Ireland and Irish writers an unusually high profile in world literature studies. In a chapter titled "The Irish Paradigm," and elsewhere throughout the book, Casanova foregrounds the achievement of the Irish Literary Revival as "a compact history of the revolt against the literary order" (304). In a phrase that is at once greatly appealing to scholars of Irish culture and deeply problematic in its assumptions and occlusions, she posits the occurrence of an "Irish miracle" between 1890 and 1930: one of "the greatest of literary revolutions," all the more remarkable for occurring in "a literarily destitute country under colonial rule" (84). The "case" of Ireland serves as an example for other "outlying countries in world literary space," and the chosen writers illustrate the various "stages" and "states" of rupture intrinsic to Casanova's model for authorial strategy in politically dependent or deprived spaces: assimilation, rebellion, or revolution (303–4).[1] Even more neatly, each of the "Big Three" in twentieth-century Irish writing (Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, and W. B. Yeats) exemplify a different manner of dealing with their "unavoidable inheritance": Beckett through the (revolutionary) rejection of his "national heritage"; Joyce, through the (also revolutionary) transformation of his patrimony; and Yeats through the rebellious (yet less revolutionary) affirmation of his national literature's difference and importance (41).[2]

My thanks to Claire Connolly and Debjani Ganguly for their helpful comments on this chapter.

1 For an insightful discussion of the use of the terms "paradigm" and "case," and of the implications of Casanova's work for comparative studies of Irish literature, see Malouf 2003: 48–66.

2 The putative fourth writer, George Bernard Shaw, functions as an example of the "assimilated" writer who integrates with a literary center (313–15).

Casanova's theorization of the world republic of letters has proven to be a provocative and contentious one. It is, in many respects, still an illuminating framework, not least because it maintains a dialectical relationship between a writer's position in world literary space and the national space from which she/he originates. As Casanova succinctly observes, "in trying to characterize a writer's work, one must situate it with respect to two things: the place occupied by his native literary space within world literature and his own position within this space" (41). And her interest in the manner in which writers "invent their own freedom" brings a welcome appreciation of formal and stylistic innovation, albeit in a work that itself contains curiously few textual quotations (41). Samuel Beckett fares especially well in Casanova's roll call, as he is the writer who has gone furthest "in the invention of a literary language," and whose texts "are among the most autonomous ever imagined" (346).[3] Joyce's autonomy is, by comparison, "almost absolute," achieved through "a very subtle Irish reappropriation of the English language" along with a subversive incorporation of "elements of every European language" (315). Casanova acknowledges that the young and precocious writer anticipated such an achievement during his Trieste years, and at this point in his career Joyce was happy to characterize his work as demonstrating a national trait: "The Irish, condemned to express themselves in a language not their own, have stamped on it the mark of their own genius and compete for glory with the civilized nations" (quoted 324). Yeats occupies a secondary and more ambiguous position in Casanova's envisioning of world literary space, as the rebel founder of a national literature who remained reliant on the institutions and recognition of London's literary center and, to an extent, dependent also on his new national public.

More problematically, this valorization of the late nineteenth-century Irish literary revolution, however attractively phrased, rests on a highly reductive simplification of the preceding (and still vibrant) Irish-language tradition, figuring it as the barren ground upon which this "miracle" appears. Although Casanova does note that "more than half of the population" spoke Irish until 1840, she also claims that "Irish had ceased to be a language of intellectual creation and communication" since the early seventeenth century "at least" (308). That a language could continue to be spoken by millions of people centuries after it had "ceased to be a language of intellectual creation and communication" might be viewed as a level of willful cultural achievement

3 In 1997 Casanova published a book-length study of Beckett, translated in 2006 as *Samuel Beckett: Anatomy of a Literary Revolution*.

unique on the global stage. Instead, a vibrant Irish-language manuscript tradition continued through the nineteenth century, and a print culture in Irish as well as English existed long before the Irish Revival.[4] Assertions as to the "miracle" of Irish literature as emerging only in the late nineteenth century are not, of course, unique to Casanova. They were commonplace among the revivalists themselves. To quote cultural critic Colin Graham, "The Revival had to be its own point of origin. In being a revival it had not quite done away with literary history, but it had started from the assumption that almost nothing was in place" (2006: 568). Yet this was strategic rhetorical positioning rather than an accurate cultural diagnosis. Joyce's famous proposition of the "cracked lookingglass of a servant" as a symbol of Irish art, and by extension, his rejection of all predecessors as "assimilators" is a similar tactical move.[5] Increasingly, and regrettably, scholars who engage with Irish literature follow suit and ignore the rich resources offered by Irish writing pre-Revival (and in both English and Irish) for an understanding of colonial and subaltern cultures.

A further problem within Casanova's deployment of the Irish case, and one that has received more commentary, is the implication that literary autonomy, in its "highest" form, requires the rejection of national and political affiliations.[6] The following quotation from her chapter "The Small Literatures" is a good example: "The political stakes change only when the literary field asserts its independence vis-à-vis national and political imperatives; when anti-national (or anational) writers appear – such as Joyce, and then Beckett, in Ireland – and, by reversing the polarity of the space, as it were, relegate national writers to political dependence, aesthetic backwardness, and academicism" (193). Such a positioning of Joyce, or Beckett, as "anti-national (or anational)" raises a persistent question, one that will recur in this chapter, as to the value and pertinence of terms such as "national," "international," and "transnational" with respect to Irish writing. Strikingly, though beyond its original remit, Casanova's comment also explains the ambivalence expressed by quite a number of later Irish writers regarding the Joycean legacy or shadow; the tenor of comparison for more obviously "national" writers is not an appealing one.

4 See Ó Ciosáin [1997] 2010 and Denvir 2006: 544–98. On the language shift from Irish to English, see Ó Ciosáin 2005: 136–52, and Kelleher 2018: 28–60.

5 This is read without scrutiny as a "brilliant" expression (Casanova 1999: 208–9).

6 In the first extensive review of the implications of Casanova's argument for Irish literary studies, Joe Cleary salutes aspects of the work but describes her Irish example as "ultimately overused" and criticizes the absence of attention to Irish partitioned space as well as her "uncritical" endorsement of a "fetishization of the literary-intellectual émigré" (2006: 204, 209).

Finally, the gender identity of the cast of Irish authors invoked by Casanova deserves interrogation: long before the Revival period, many nineteenth-century Irish women interacted with the literary centers of London, Paris, and New York, as journalists, editors, and authors. Some participated in extensive international networks beyond these metropolitan centers, both professionally – for example, through the influential Tauchnitz continental European publishers – and personally, through familial imperial connections.[7] The life and career of nineteenth-century novelist Maria Edgeworth is a notable example; more broadly her work demonstrates how the category of world literature as it relates to Irish writing needs to take into account the complexity and long duration of Irish participation in the history of empire.

Ireland and Empire: The Case of Maria Edgeworth

Given the brevity of its text, Maria Edgeworth's best-known work *Castle Rackrent* has acquired a remarkable status in European literary history. Hailed as the first regional novel in English, and a direct influence on writers such as Walter Scott and Jane Austen, *Castle Rackrent* was published in 1800, making it contemporaneous with the passing of the Acts of Union, which saw the ending of limited Irish self-government and the absorption of Dublin's parliamentary representation into Westminster. The work, first published anonymously in London as a "Hibernian Tale," proved immediately popular, generating editions in Boston and New York and an early French translation. Both text and author now occupy an intriguingly unstable place in Irish literary historiography, specifically when read through a postcolonial lens. Thus, narrator Thady Quirk is read variously as a feudal lackey or as an exemplar of "sly civility" and anticolonial subversion.[8] Competing interpretations of the politics of the text also differ in the significance given Edgeworth's class position and commitment to paternalistic landlordism. In Seamus Deane's appraisal, they render her deeply suspect: "Edgeworth believed that Ireland was backward, unenlightened, poor, ill led, even romantic, not because it was colonial culture but because it was Ireland" (1997: 32). Deane, however, concedes that her novels offer an early form of "imperial romance," in which

7 Notable examples of nineteenth-century Irish authors who published with Tauchnitz include Julia Kavanagh (who lived for many years in Paris), Sarah Grand, and "Iota" (Kathleen Mannington Caffyn).

8 For postcolonial readings of *Castle Rackrent*, see Eagleton 1995: 167–77, and Kiberd 2000: 243–64.

a "'utilitarian' adventure is undertaken in a romantic territory in order to conquer it, remap it, domesticate it" (30).

When examined across her long life and writing career, both Edgeworth's personal and publication history illustrate the intricate interrelationship of domestic and imperial concerns.[9] In 1834, soon after the publication of what would prove to be her last novel, *Helen*, Edgeworth wrote to a family member about the difficulties of "writing Ireland" in fiction. Here, in a passage which both precedes and amplifies Joyce's looking glass, she vividly describes the challenges to fictional representation posed by the country's deep social and political instability: "[I]t is impossible to draw Ireland as she now is in a book of fiction – realities are too strong, party passions too violent to bear to see, or care to look at their faces in the looking-glass. The people would only break the glass, and curse the fool who held the mirror up to nature – distorted nature, in a fever" (F. Edgeworth 1867: 87–88). This passage has become a critical commonplace in studies of Irish literature but less often remarked upon is that Edgeworth penned this remark in a letter to her half-brother, Michael Pakenham Edgeworth, who was then stationed in Uttar Pradesh as a member of the Indian Civil Service.[10] Michael Pakenham (1812–81), only one of many Irishmen who served in the Indian Civil Service, remained there for many decades; he was appointed Commissioner for the settlement of the Punjab in 1850 and compiled extensive diaries of his time in India from the late 1820s to 1867.[11]

Edgeworth's writings had made their way to India long before her brother's arrival, and imperial settings, including India, China, and the West Indies, appear frequently in her early fiction. Her *Popular Tales* (1804) features a number of stories of imperial adventures – for example, the story "Lame Jervas" relates the fortunes of a young Cornwall orphan who travels with the East India Company. In the course of his travels, he visits the imperial court of Tippoo Sultan where he displays scientific innovations such as the telegraph, the balloon, an "apparatus for freezing water," and new tin-mining methods (Vol. I: 74). "The Grateful Negro," a story set in Jamaica, features two slave-holding planters who are distinguished from each other by their

9 On Edgeworth's European circles, see Ó Gallchoir 2005.

10 One important exception is in Connolly (2012), where Claire Connolly comments on Edgeworth's "wonder at the heat endured by her brother: she is amazed at the '*puddle* [of] ink' that stained his last '*dropping* letter' home" (2–3).

11 Michael Pakenham Edgeworth studied at the East India College at Haileybury from 1829 to 1830 and traveled to India in 1831 to work with the Bengal Civil Service. For more information on his life, see Lawrenson 2015: 159–76. Pakenham Edgeworth is now recognized as a pioneer in botany and photography.

contrasting treatment of slaves and by the different political economies, as well as modes of resistance, that their methods engender.[12] As Vera Kreilkamp observes, in this story a slave revolt is transformed into "a moral exemplum" and "ruling-class paternalism" wins the day, in an early rehearsal of themes that would recur less violently throughout Edgeworth's fiction set in Ireland (2004: 159). In *Ennui* (1809), India appears, to quote Marilyn Butler, as "a moral trampoline, where characters go for healthy moral exercise, and to get the kudos of turning a bad old world into a brave new one" (45).[13] Similarly, in the early *Belinda* (1801), set largely in London, gambling is characterized as an imperial vice that threatens domestic order (see Richard 2004).

The circulation and reception of Edgeworth's works within Indian colonial culture has received more recent critical attention. In her nonfictional work *Essays on Professional Education*, published under her father's name in 1809, Edgeworth comments extensively on the influence of early reading and on the works that should be supplied to young men destined for imperial service.[14] As Sharon Murphy has shown, Edgeworth's own work often headed the fiction list in book orders for the East India Company's lending libraries: in an early booklist from 1819 entitled "List of Books Sent to Bengal," her work *Popular Tales* (1804) is listed first, followed by *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, *Robinson Crusoe*, Irishwoman Mary Leadbetter's *Cottage Dialogues*, and all of the works of Walter Scott (Murphy 2009: 80). As late as 1849, an edition of her *Popular Tales* was published in Calcutta (Loeber and Loeber 2006: 416).[15]

One particular scene of colonial reading is worth reproducing in some detail. It occurs in the memoir of William Henry Sleeman (1788–1856), an imperial administrator described by Alex Tickell as "an ambitious Company officer and a tireless self-publicist," best known for his leadership of the anti-*thagi* (or thugee) campaign in the 1830s (2012: 32). Sleeman describes an occasion early in his Indian service when he presented Edgeworth's writings

12 "The Grateful Negro" has received considerable critical interrogation: see in particular Boulukos 2008 and Manly 2013: 19–36.

13 *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811) by Edgeworth's contemporary Irishwoman Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan), is set in seventeenth-century colonial India, during the Spanish-Portuguese conflict there; see Julia Wright's excellent edition for Broadview Press (Owenson 2002).

14 For more information, see Murphy 2004.

15 Nineteenth-century book catalogues resourced and digitized by the SouthHem research project (led by Porscha Fermanis) show that circulating libraries and public libraries in cities such as Cape Town and Sydney held many of Edgeworth's works in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s; see www.ucd.ie/southhem/catalogue.html.

to his commanding officer, Colonel Gregory.[16] The account opens with a military encomium within which the soldier's ability to be moved by the literary work, and his confusion of truth and fictional fancy, are first offered as charming attributes:

> He was an old man when I first became acquainted with him. I put into his hands, when in camp, Miss Edgeworth's novels, in the hope of being able to induce him to read by degrees; and I have frequently seen the tears stealing down his furrowed cheeks, as he sat pondering over her pages in the corner of his tent. A braver soldier never lived than old G ——; and he distinguished himself greatly in the command of his regiment, under Lord Lake, at the battle of Laswaree and siege of Bhurtpore. It was impossible ever to persuade him that the characters and incidents of these novels were the mere creation of fancy – he felt them to be true – he wished them to be true, and he would have them to be true. We were not very anxious to undeceive him, as the illusion gave him pleasure and did him good. Bolingbroke says, after an ancient author, "History is philosophy teaching by example." With equal truth may we say that fiction, like that of Maria Edgeworth, is philosophy teaching by emotion. It certainly taught Old G —— to be a better man, to leave much of the little evil he had been in the habit of doing, and to do much of the good he had been accustomed to leave undone.
>
> (Sleeman 1844, I: 149–50)[17]

The closing critique – with its evocation of deeds that are clearly other than heroic and, for this memoir, unmentionable – raises questions that spill beyond the scene described, and beyond the Edgeworthian assertion of fiction's power to achieve moral improvement within an imperial world space.

Yeats: Toward a Transnational Poetics

Writing on the topic of gender and history in Yeats's work, Elizabeth Butler Cullingford judiciously notes: "A critic who would do justice to the insights of feminism while engaging fully with Yeats's poetry must entertain the recuperative as well as the suspicious critical impulses, and accept contradiction as inevitable" (1993: 10). Any effort to locate Yeats and his work within paradigms of world literature, or national versus international or transnational contexts, experiences a similar tension. Focusing firstly on his national

16 This passage is reproduced in part by Sharon Murphy in "Imperial Reading" 2009: 79–80; my thanks to her for this reference.

17 The 1915 edition of Sleeman's lengthy memoir, *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, first published in 1844, is available online through Project Gutenberg. The reading scene occurs at the end of chapter 17.

credentials (which, for Casanova, limit his revolutionary status), as author of "Easter, 1916," Yeats composed the most famous poem on the movement for Irish political independence, albeit from a perspective of deep ambivalence. This is most obviously signaled in the oxymoronic refrain "a terrible beauty is born" but also in the less-often-quoted lines, "Too long a sacrifice / Can make a stone of the heart." When awarded the global Nobel Prize in 1923, he accepted it as a representative of the newly established state: "I consider that this honour has come to me less as an individual than as a representative of Irish literature, it is part of Europe's welcome to the Free State" (Foster 2003: 245). His later political career as Senator in the new parliament would include many impassioned denunciations of the social conservatism of the religious-led political order, at the same time that he also entertained European fascist and reactionary politics (Butler-Cullingford 1981: 165–96). And while in the first stages of his career, he drew extensively and masterfully from ancient Irish myth and folklore, using translations and resources provided by friends such as Augusta Gregory who could understand Irish, a key strategic self-positioning in those early years was to present himself as part of the "new": of "a new country like Ireland – and English-speaking Ireland is very new" (Yeats 1895: 58). As a consequence, the literary use of English in Ireland could be viewed less as a colonial language continuing through British domination and more as a recent arrival, of emerging status within a long native cultural tradition.[18]

W. B. Yeats's friendship with Rabindranath Tagore, while short-lived, is a revealing instance of internationalist connections forged from comparable though very different national concerns. Yeats was introduced to Tagore in London in June 1912 by artist William Rothenstein, and the Irish writer was immediately impressed by the power of the Bengali poet's work, as translated into English (Foster 1997: 469). His introduction to *Gitanjali*, Tagore's collection of these self-translations, or trans-creations, contained the oft-quoted imprimatur: "I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me."[19] In March 1913 Yeats presented a lecture on Tagore's

18 For more on this, see Barry Sheils's recent study *W.B. Yeats and World Literature: The Subject of Poetry*, Ashgate (2015). In chapter 3, "'Put into English': The Monoglot Translator and World Literature," Sheils reads Yeats as "a writer cast upon the swelling tide of *world* English in the early twentieth century" (101).

19 *Gitanjali* was published by the India Society in November 1912 in a limited edition of 750 copies, and by Macmillan in 1913; by November 1913 when Tagore received the Nobel Prize, it had been reprinted ten times.

poetry in Dublin, in which he announced plans to stage Tagore's play *The Post Office* at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. This took place two months later, along with an Irish-language play by Patrick Pearse, future leader of the 1916 rebellion, and as part of a fundraiser for Pearse's school (Foster 1997: 472).

To Yeats, Tagore and Bengali culture exemplified a tradition "where poetry and religion are the same thing," one which has "passed through the centuries, gathering from learned and unlearned metaphor and emotion," and "carried back again to the multitude the thought of the scholar and noble" (Yeats 1913: xii). This perceived vision of a unity of culture, and putative social harmony realized through art, was an especially appealing alternative to a modern materialistic age bitterly characterized by the Irish poet in contemporary poems like "September 1913" and "To a Shade." Unsurprisingly, and rightly, such simplifications of Tagore's work and significance, and their deployment by Yeats for more local ends, have generated considerable critical scrutiny, along with evidence of a marked cooling in friendship between the writers in later years (Foster 1997: 469–73). Yet read together, the combined writings and perspectives of the Irish and Bengali writers can also support, in Malcolm Sen's terms, a "subversive anti-colonial ethics of world-humanism," and one of continuing power (2010: 20–23).

In 1988, the Field Day pamphlet series, part of the Field Day Theatre company and the leading organ of Irish postcolonial studies, published Edward Said's "Yeats and Decolonization," along with contributions by Frederic Jameson ("Modernism and Imperialism") and Terry Eagleton ("Nationalism: Irony and Commitment").[20] Said's argument, continued later in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), was that Yeats's "almost complete" assimilation to the canons of modern English literature and of European high modernism, as great modern Irish poet, was at the expense of his place in a tradition of the "colonial world ruled by European imperialism" and of the "metropolitan anti-imperialist opposition that has been called the age of decolonization" (5). Much of the force of Said's reading of Yeats as a poet of decolonization comes from his determination not to avoid or excuse "Yeats's slide into incoherence and mysticism, his rejection of politics and his arrogant but often charming espousal of fascism (or if not fascism then authoritarianism . . .)" (5). But in an alternative political narrative, where liberation rather than nationalist independence is the ultimate goal (in Said's words, "a transformation of social consciousness beyond national consciousness"), Yeats's greatest decolonizing works emerge as those that "literally conceive of

20 These were published as Field Day Pamphlets, Nos. 13–15 (Eagleton 1988; Jameson 1988; and Said 1988).

the birth of violence, or the violent birth of change" (16, 21). Crucially, Yeats's "prophetic perception" has a further significance for anticolonial political resistance, arising from his recognition "that at some point violence cannot be enough." Consequently "Yeats situates himself" – or is situated by Said – "at that juncture where the violence of change is unarguable, but where the results of the violence beseech necessary, if not always sufficient, reason" (21).

Yeats's entry into a "transnational" literary discourse is most fully achieved in recent work by Jahan Ramazani, where the various ways in which the poet's life and work "exceed the bounds of a nationalist disciplinary framework" are not only identifiers of literary multiculturalism but also the means toward suggestive comparative alignments (2009: 32). As Ramazani notes, Yeats's writing "hybridizes English and Irish genres, meters, and orthographies, while also incorporating forms and motifs from East and South Asia" (32). Poetry "is a means of geographic and temporal travel" as in poems such as "Sailing to Byzantium," and "in 'Lapis Lazuli,' Yeats intercuts Renaissance England, modern Europe, ancient Greece and China" (32). This identification of "transnational poetics" also allows Ramazani to construct a surprising and productive comparison between Yeats and the less-well-known modernist and "Anglo-Euro-Judeo-American poet" Mina Loy, as poets sharing "fractured identifications" and "cross-national and cross-cultural interstitiality" (32–33). The particular value of these cross-national readings lies in Ramazani's fine attention to poetic forms and the diversity of their political engagements: "Elegy, as Yeats's poetry indicates, can be put in the service of nationalism, equivocal nationalism, antinationalism, transnationalism, and many combinations of these positions" (81).

Contemporary Irish Fiction and the World

The elegiac mode also prevails in modern Irish fiction, particularly within "The Big House" novel, inaugurated by Maria Edgeworth's novel *Castle Rackrent* – or more accurately termed "the fall of the Big House novel" (Kreilkamp 2004: 180). Over two centuries, this subgenre has shown the continuing significance of empire in producing a transnational frame for Irish literature and also depicts its destabilizing legacy. Most ambitiously, J. G. Farrell's Empire Trilogy begins with *Troubles* (1970), set during the Irish war of independence and with a shell-shocked World War I veteran as its main character, and then moves to the Indian Mutiny in *Siege of Krishnapur* (1973), and then to the fate of Singapore during World War II in *The Singapore Grip* (1978). Later twentieth-century "Big House" texts focus on the collapse

of a Protestant Ascendancy class isolated from both British forbears and Catholic neighbors, offering "claustrophobic accounts of social isolates" (Kreilkamp 2004: 180). Albeit set in very particularized domestic scenes, many connect the economic decline of an Anglo-Irish class with large-scale political changes on an international plane; examples include Jennifer Johnston's *How Many Miles to Babylon?* (1974) and Aidan Higgins's *Langrishe, Go Down* (1966).

Some critiques of recent Irish literature have faulted authors for their preoccupation with a national past or for their perceived failure to engage with more contemporary issues. However, an assessment that takes into account the trajectory of a career, rather than individual works, shows that many contemporary Irish writers move freely, and valuably, across national, international, and transnational terrain (see, for example, Cleary 2018). In the case of Colm Tóibín, his early fictional settings ranged from Barcelona (*The South*, 1990) to Wexford, Ireland (*The Heather Blazing*, 1992) to Argentina (*The Story of the Night*, 1996) before returning to Wexford in *The Blackwater Lightship* (1999). This latter novel is told from the perspective of Declan, a man returning home from Europe fatally ill with AIDS; the exile's return, a recurring theme in Tóibín's short fiction, is also movingly deployed within his diasporic novel *Brooklyn* (2009). His turn to Greek and Christian myth in more recent work (such as *The House of Names* [2016] and *Testament of Mary* [2012]) brings a narrative pulse both universalist and vividly local, a hallmark of his work that escapes more national-based assessments.

Airports – with their associated themes of mobility and displacement, the freedom to travel, and the terror of enforced departures – make many appearances in contemporary Irish fiction, including the closing scene of Anne Enright's remarkable *The Gathering* (2007) and her 2017 *New Yorker* story "The Hotel." An early internationalist work by Enright was her fictional biography of real-life Irishwoman Eliza Lynch, who in the 1860s eloped to Paraguay with Francisco Solano Lopez, the future president of Paraguay. Her novel *The Green Road* (2015) combines scenes set in early 1990s New York with depictions of twenty-first-century development work in Mali, as part of its portrait – or collage – of an Irish rural family and their reunion. In a longer lineage of diasporic fiction, Enright's and Tóibín's novels suggest interesting comparisons with the work of Irish-American novelist Alice McDermott and of emigrants Edna O'Brien (to London) and Maeve Brennan (to New York). More recently, Nigerian-born Melatu Uche Okorie's collection *This Hostel Life* (2018) has garnered deserved critical acclaim, as a powerful portrayal of

the hidden lives of migrant women who reside in direct provision centers, a contemporary scandal.[21]

While the work of Colum McCann most readily lends itself to transnational readings (most especially his novels *Let the Great World Spin* [2009] and *Transatlantic* [2013]), other Irish novels with domestic settings (such as Mike McCormack's *Solar Bones* [2016]) also address global interconnections and, in the case of *Solar Bones*, offer a compelling portrait of global economic collapse and environmental crisis. This extract from McCormack's novel, which is written as one single unfinished sentence from the posthumous perspective of Marcus, a civil engineer, is a graphic example. Marcus's wife, Mairéad, has been afflicted by chronic food poisoning arising from contamination of the region's water by cryptosporidium (in 2007, an outbreak in Galway, in western Ireland, resulted in over 100,000 people needing to boil their water for five months):[22]

> history was personal and politics was personal or
> to put it another way
> history and politics were now a severe intestinal disorder, spliced into the figure of my wife who sweated along the pale length of her body with the stylized, beatific glow of an allegorical figure in an altarpiece while
> day by day, listening to the news bulletins, I developed a twitchy impatience towards those other global issues which commanded the news headlines as it became obvious that only when these grand themes had been treated and analysed would the news bulletins turn their attention to the environmental health hazard out west, a ragged postscript tagged onto the bottom of these bigger stories[23] (McCormack 2016: 120)

The global recognition of Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett continues apace, but the translation of contemporary Irish writing, supported by modest resources from the Irish state, has enabled the reputation of other writers to grow in non-anglophone contexts. Thanks largely to the efforts of the cultural

21 Anne Mulhall's chapter on life writing and personal testimony in *A History of Modern Irish Women's Literature* provides an invaluable guide to recent writings concerning women's "migration, race and the politics of value" (2018: 398–409).

22 See, for example, the newspaper reports of the subsequent economic cost of the outbreak. Paul Melia, "Cryptosporidium outbreak cost €19m." *Independent*, July 12, 2016. www.independent.ie/irish-news/water/irish-water-crisis/cryptosporidium-outbreak-cost-19m-34875224.html. On contemporary Irish fictional depictions of "the global South," see Eatough 2020.

23 See Sharae Deckard's article for the *Irish Times Bookclub*, published online on October 21, 2016, entitled "Solar Bones is that extraordinary thing, an accessible experiment, virtuosic yet humane." For other recent studies of the novel, see Flynn 2018: 70–95, and Sen 2019: 13–31.

organization Literature Ireland, translations of Irish works are widely circulated, ranging from works by John Banville into Japanese, Colm Tóibín's novels into Chinese, and Anne Enright's novels into Latvian. Global translations of Joyce's *Ulysses* include the recent work of Kurdish author and translator Kawa Nemir, who has translated Joyce into the Kurdish language of Kurmanji.

Cré na Cille (variously translated as *The Dirty Dust* or *The Graveyard Clay*) by Máirtín Ó Cadhain is widely regarded as the greatest novel in the Irish language; first published in 1949, and set in a Connemara graveyard full of squabbling corpses, it remained inaccessible to English-language readers until 2016–17, when two English translations were published. Yet translations from Irish into Norwegian and Danish had previously appeared and a Czech translation was published in late 2017. Contemporary writing in Irish is characterized by two forms of "transnational Irish-language writing," as critic Máirín Nic Eoin has identified, and both in a "healthy" state of creative energy: first, writing produced by authors of Irish birth or extraction who write from elsewhere (such as writers Tomás Mac Síomóin, Pádraig Ó Siadhail, Seán Hutton, and Derry O'Sullivan), and, second, Irish-language writing "by authors of non-Irish birth or extraction living in Ireland or elsewhere" (including Dutch-born Alex Hijmans, German-Polish poet Andreas Vogel, and Finnish author Panu Petteri Höglund) (Nic Eoin 2013). Hijmans is an especially interesting example of creative multilingualism: born and raised in the Netherlands, an adult learner of Irish and now resident in Brazil, his published work in Irish includes *Favela*, a nonfiction book about life in a Brazilian favela (2009), *Aiséiri,* a novel (2011), and *Splancanna ó Shaol Eile* (2013), a collection of 100 short photo essays on contemporary Brazil.[24]

The cultural vibrancy of contemporary Ireland does not lend itself easily to the exuberant terms of "literary revolution" or "miracle" Casanova used to describe the Literary Revival of over a century ago, though the survival of artistic practitioners and cultural initiatives through the recent economic recession, and despite chronic underfunding of the arts, deserves its own superlative. The continuance of such creativity depends on both indigenous support and international recognition, a reality now recognized at least in part by the Irish government in its prioritization of culture among instruments designed to enhance the country's global visibility in the years leading

24 For more information on Hijmans and other recent Irish texts, see "Digital Platform for Contemporary Irish Writing," at www.contemporaryirishwriting.ie/50irishbooks.

to 2025.[25] The year 2022 marks a striking conjunction of anniversaries: the formation of the Irish Free State, the commencement of Ireland's Civil War, and the publication of *Ulysses*; from the cracked looking glass of Irish history to Ireland's most famous global literary product.

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25 For more information on these governmental activities, see www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/news/global-reputati.

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19

Korean Worlds and Echoes from the Cold War

DANIEL Y. KIM

In 2005, an English-language translation of *The Guest*, by the eminent South Korean novelist Hwang Sok-Yong, was published by Seven Stories Press. This work tells the story of Yosŏp Ryu, a Korean American minister who travels to Sinch'on, his hometown, which is located in what is now North Korea. During this journey, he is visited by multiple ghosts who recount their memories of a horrific massacre that took place during the Korean War in which roughly 35,000 civilians were killed over the course of a roughly two-month period in late 1950. These killings did not take place during a clearly defined series of military actions or conventional battles but rather, as the literary critic Youngju Ryu puts it, through "a series of reprisals within a well-established community with a long shared history. As such, the massacre bore the intensely personal character of violence articulated at a close range on the bodies of people intimately known" (2015: 637).

In his Author's Note, Hwang points out that the contemporary resonances of his novel were shaped by the 9/11 attacks, which occurred shortly after its publication:

> The onset of this new "Age of Terror," along with the inclusion of North Korea in the so-called Axis of Evil, and the beginning of a whole new war, made the fragility of our condition clearer than ever. It was a chilling experience to be so reminded that despite the collapse of the Cold War infrastructure, our small peninsula is still bound by the delicate chains of war. (2005: 8)

A related sense of continuity was registered by reviewers of Ha Jin's *War Trash* who saw its depiction of the abuses that were inflicted on POWs in US-administered camps during the Korean War as a commentary on incidents that had become highly visible in 2004 when the novel appeared. Linda Jaivin, for example, saw this work as suggesting that "Abu Ghraib could be tradition, not aberration."

The Guest and *War Trash* are among a number of works that have been published in the United States since 9/11 that have taken up the topic of the Korean War. Other examples discussed here include Jayne Anne Phillips's *Lark and Termite* (2010) and Chang-rae Lee's *The Surrendered* (2010). In looking back to a conflict that was obviously of monumental significance to Koreans themselves but known in the United States primarily as "the forgotten war," what do such novels offer to scholars of world literature in regard to the modes of inquiry that the field should explore? What insights do they offer about our current moment and the historical trajectories that brought us here?

For one thing, as Hwang's comments suggest, these novels suggest a continuity between the conflicts that erupted during the so-called Cold War in places like Korea and Vietnam and the ones that the United States has engaged in since then in places like Afghanistan: wars in which US military actions have catalyzed or exacerbated the violence of local civil conflicts and in which the majority of those who end up being killed or injured are not combatants but civilians caught in the crossfire. They thus offer a countervailing perspective – akin to the one that Debjani Ganguly elaborates in her study *The Thing Called the World* – to a commonplace view of our current era as taking shape through epochal shifts that took place either in 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell, or 2001, when the twin towers fell. Ganguly identifies "the period around 1989" as constituting a kind of *kairos* – "as a critical threshold of the 'contemporary' that contains within its intensified temporality developments from the 1960s to the present," developments that include the "globalization of a human rights culture" and "the rise of new forms of warfare and insurgencies" (2016: 6).[1] The novels taken up here, like the ones Ganguly examines, "were written under the shadow of the wars that followed the triumphalism of 1989," and as such they reflect the "profound decline of liberal ideological hegemony" that was engendered in part by the fact that the end of the Cold War had not brought an end to military conflict but inaugurated an era of perpetual war – of military conflicts "characterized by transnational forms of violence that occur at the interface of conventional warfare between sovereign states, organized crime, and state-sponsored violations of human rights through population displacement and genocides" (8, 9).

The novels we address suggest how the complex periodization of the present that Ganguly offers might be extended further backward to make

1 The novels addressed here are not so much concerned with two other developments that are vital to Ganguly's argument, which are "an accelerated growth in information and communication technologies" and the rise of "new media forms" (2016: 6).

the Korean War (1950–53) visible as another crucial point of departure. For it is worth noting that several aspects of the multiple wars the United States has waged since then first appeared in that conflict: these include the bypassing of a Constitutionally mandated declaration from Congress, the leveraging of human rights and humanitarian standards that were formalized in the late 1940s, and the highlighting of the racial diversity of US combat forces (see Conway-Lanz 2005; Dudziak 2000; McAllister 2001; Scarry 1992). These works do not, however, seek to mark June 25, 1950 – when North Korean forces invaded the South – as the true origin point of the contemporary. Rather these works situate the fighting that took place between 1950 and 1953 within a penumbral blur, highlighting its permeability to historical trajectories that preceded and were subsequent to the war itself.

The shift in perspective these works invite is spatial as well as temporal, for they invite us to consider not just the global but also the more regional ways in which "our small peninsula," in Hwang's words, has been "bound by the delicate chains of war" (2005: 8). For *The Guest*, *War Trash*, and *The Surrendered* all throw into relief the Korean War's proximity to the imperial wars waged by Japan in the Asia-Pacific through the first decades of the twentieth century that made it a global power by the 1940. Jin's novel also suggests a continuity with the Chinese Civil War (1945–49). While these works emphasize that the Korean War was at heart a civil war, they also suggest how its violence was shaped by the larger Asian powers that the Korean peninsula lies between.

We might, thus, think of "the delicate chains of war" that bind East Asia as versions of what Karen Thornber has termed "contact nebulae." In "Rethinking the World in World Literature," Thornber argues that a greater critical awareness of the multivalent connections among East Asian nations might "help world literature shed its lingering Eurocentrism and move closer to region-neutrality" (2014: 461), and she offers the metaphor of "contact nebulae" – a modification of Mary Louise Pratt's concept of "contact zones" – to convey the more heterogeneous forms of connection that have defined that region (463). While Pratt's model assumes the initial unfamiliarity and stark power differentials that structured European colonial encounters, Thornber points out that East Asia was defined by "exchanges among regional neighbors with longstanding relationships" so that "[i]nternal chaos and American and European oppression in China, paired with Japan's emergence as a colonial power at the end of the nineteenth century, radically transformed rather than introduced contacts among East Asian peoples and cultures" (463).

Thornber's primary concern is with *aesthetic* networks in which "artists from cultures in (formerly) unequal power relationships interact and transculturate one another's creative input." She asserts that "intra-East Asian artistic contacts rarely replicated the steep asymmetries promoted by imperial discourse," at least politically and militarily. Nevertheless, it is necessary to recognize that the contact nebulae within which Korea has been enmeshed for much of its long history have been structured by interactions with its much more powerful regional neighbors – Japan and China – and that these interactions have often taken shape as empire and war (463). In a related insight, Jini Kim Watson notes that Korea has been largely absent as an object of concern for postcolonial studies (and arguably for world literature scholarship as well), which is probably a product of the fact that it "was colonized . . . by the Japanese (who occupied it from 1905–1945)," and therefore falls outside "the dominant construction of Anglo- and Francophone postcolonial literary studies" (2014: 71). The peninsula's continuing division, moreover, epitomizes its "not-yet-completed liberation from colonial status that would result in a unified nation-state of its own" (73). Watson asserts that grappling with Korea's peculiar "not-yet-postcolonial" status "requires us to think through a new constellation of spatial figures," which include "division and partition" and "two incomplete nation-states frozen in a sixty-year ceasefire at the very moment of decolonization" (71, 70).

The persistent existence of two Korean nation-states thus also complicates the globalizing temporality mentioned earlier, one in which 1989 looms large. As Hoenik Kwon pointedly asserts: "The first step toward an understanding of cold war history as a genuinely global, locally grounded history will be to ask ourselves, when someone tells us that the cold war is globally over, whose cold war and which aspects of the cold war is that person talking about?" (2010: 36). For, the suspended state of Korea's postcoloniality also signals how premature the proclamations of the Cold War's demise are in reference to "our small peninsula."

As should now be evident, the Korean War can and should be situated in relation to several temporal and spatial imaginaries: as a point of departure for the contemporary as Ganguly periodizes it, as shaped by the East Asian contact nebulae Thornber describes, enmeshed in the region's complex history of what we might term internal empire, and in its continuing status as a marker of the persistence of a Cold War that from a US-European perspective has been deemed a historical relic since 1989. One particularly rich site for exploring how a reading practice attuned to the multilayered complexities of the histories that have shaped Korea might proceed is

Hwang's *The Guest*, the power of which stems, as Jini Kim Watson puts it, from how it "very carefully reveals an event of global history from a radically localized epistemology" (2014: 80).

"The Delicate Chains of War" and *The Guest*

That *The Guest*'s eponymous conceit is intended to illuminate how China and Japan along with the United States are implicated in the "delicate chains of war" that have bound the peninsula – the contact nebula in which Korea's civil war was enmeshed – is evident from Hwang's Author's Note:

> When smallpox was first identified as a Western disease that needed to be warded off, the Korean people referred to it as *"mama"* or *"sonnim,"* the second of which translates to "guest." With this in mind, I settled upon *The Guest* as a fitting title for a novel that explores the arrival and effects of Christianity and Marxism in a country where both were initially as foreign as smallpox. (2005: 7)

The novel itself emphasizes, however, that if these ideologies which fueled the massacre were indeed foreign "guests," they were ones that had been *invited* in by their Korean hosts. For in the historical account the novel offers, the local formations that took shape around these ideologies did not result from a brute imposition of imperial powers; rather, they constituted forms of transculturation that took shape as Koreans negotiated the two great Asian powers that have shaped their history, China and Japan.

The Guest does trace the itineraries of the Western missionaries who first brought their religion to the peninsula but makes plain that Korean converts were responsible for its popularization.[2] One of these early converts was Samsŏng Ryu, the great-grandfather of the novel's protagonist Yosŏp. He embraced Christianity not to ingratiate himself to Western powers but out of his resentment toward the sinocentric Chosŏn regime which ruled Korea for centuries (1392–1910) and whose ultimate loyalties were to the Middle Kingdom. While his family was already financially comfortable, having become landowners by managing property for the monarchy, Samsŏng came to realize that he would never gain a lucrative government position because of a bias against residents of northwestern provinces of Korea. His conversion was an act of rebellion. After Chosŏn was supplanted by the colonial apparatus imposed by the Japanese when they annexed Korea in

2 T. S. Lee offers a similar account of the religion's rapid emergence in Korea during the late nineteenth century.

1910, the Ryus offered no resistance. Indeed, Yosŏp's father worked for the Japanese as an agent, seizing the opportunity to increase his family's wealth. Overall the novel characterizes Christianity as a religion that was originally embraced by relatively well-to-do Koreans at odds with Chosŏn who then comprised a comprador class that collaborated with the Japanese so long as it proved profitable.[3]

Marxism constitutes another contact nebula shaped by Chinese and Japanese transculturation, but one that emerged among those who were disenfranchised and exploited during both the Chosŏn dynasty and the colonial period. *The Guest* accords a greater ethical and political legitimacy to this cultural formation largely through its depiction of Ichiro, a servant whom Yosŏp, as a boy, had regarded in quasi-familial terms. The novel reveals the grinding poverty and tragedy that Ichiro had faced throughout his life: he had been orphaned, jailed by the Japanese colonial authorities for engaging in slash-and-burn farming, which had been outlawed, and lost his wife. As a middle-aged man, he eked out a living by performing menial tasks for families like the Ryus.

Ichiro was exposed to Marxism after the liberation of Korea in 1945 and soon became a leading figure in the local Communist Party. His conversion to its tenets came through his interactions with a Korean Communist who had fought alongside the Chinese in Manchuria against the Japanese. Marxism gave Ichiro access not only to literacy but to a view of history that described his lowly status not as part of a natural social order but as the consequence of an oppressive system predicated on forcibly extracting labor from men like himself, one that had simply been repurposed by the Japanese. Moreover, it gave him a sense of self-worth, which he expressed by reclaiming his Korean name, Pak Illang.

By drawing attention to East Asian formations of cultural interaction – contact nebulae – in which the West does not occupy the pivotal role, *The Guest* thus helps to address the lacuna in world literature scholarship that Thornber has identified, as the salient players in the historical drama the novel unfolds are not just Koreans themselves, but political and cultural forces that originate from China and Japan.

While a version of aesthetic transculturation more familiar to readers in the West is evident in the novel's magic realist mode, which Hwang acknowledges as having been inspired by Gabriel García Márquez, he asserts that it was

3 Hwang's rendering of Christianity's role in modern Korean history is openly polemical and thus partial. For a more expansive account, see Park 2003.

"modeled after the Chongwi exorcism of Hwanghae Province . . . As is the case during an actual exorcism, the dead and the living simultaneously cross and recross the boundaries between past and present, appearing at what seem like random intervals to share each of their memories" (2005: 7). This structure allows the ghosts of both Christians and Communists to offer their memories of the massacre while obviating the issue of punishment since it has no meaning to those who have passed over. As one of the ghosts who visits Yosŏp reveals: "There aren't any sides over there – no my-side-against-your-side" (28).

In this respect, the novel's form seems to anticipate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Republic of Korea (TRCK), which was established in 2005. The TRCK was formed under the administrations of Presidents Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun. It was only with the election of Kim's predecessor, Kim Young-Sam, in 1992, that decades of rule by military dictators came to an end. The TRCK's mandate was to investigate "most wrongdoings committed by the state in the past," which included "illegal massacres before and after the Korean War"; like many similar bodies, its primary aim was "truth-verification rather than judicial prosecution of perpetrators as a means of rectifying past wrongdoings" (Kim 2010: 545). While the TRCK did not directly address Sinch'on, it did investigate a number of similar massacres in which the preponderance of violence was enacted by anticommunists.

The testimonies given by the ghosts in *The Guest* – as critics Youngju Ryu and Jini Kim Watson have both noted in their astute accounts of the novel – directly challenge dominant national narratives that identify foreign powers as the primary perpetrators of such atrocities. For in the novel's telling, the primary agents of the violence were members of a right-wing youth group who targeted anyone they accused of being allied with the Communists. One of their leaders was Yosŏp's older brother Yohan, who dies shortly before his younger brother's departure for North Korea. Yohan's ghost calmly recounts to his brother the horrendous actions in which he was involved: he ordered men under his command to drag Ichiro and his family into an air-raid shelter with hundreds of other alleged Communist sympathizers where they were all burned alive; he killed an old family friend, Uncle Sunnam, by hanging him from a utility pole; he shot and killed Ms. Yun, a beloved schoolteacher; and he murdered two adolescent female North Korean soldiers, who were just musicians.

By structuring its narrative around Yosŏp's pilgrimage of atonement, *The Guest* signals that its primary concern is not the guilt of perpetrators but the ethical responsibility of those who were, like its protagonist, bystanders.

Yosŏp's responsibility stems, however, not from being a passive witness – for he was not present when the atrocities took place – but from being a direct beneficiary of at least one of the egregious acts that his older brother committed: Yohan's brutal murder of the two female soldiers that his younger brother had helped hide from the marauding Christians. Had Yosŏp's assistance been discovered, he and his brother both likely faced torture and execution. Moreover, as a result of his brother's actions, Yosŏp was able to survive and flee to the South. Hwang, thus, offers Yosŏp as a proxy for any of his novel's readers who benefited from the horrors that took place in places like Sinch'on even if they were not directly involved in them. *The Guest* implicitly evokes South Korea as a kind of bystander nation, as it were, which was able to survive and rise from the ashes of war because of the heinous deeds that were committed by some of its citizens in its name.

Implicated as well are the Korean American immigrants whose access to the fabled American Dream was underwritten by the kinds of atrocities that occurred in places like Sinch'on. For as Watson notes, by stressing how Yosŏp's life was defined by two migrations, first to the South and then to the United States where he became a naturalized citizen, *The Guest* invites an understanding of "the Korean diaspora simultaneously as *intra*national and transnational" (2014: 80). In so doing, she argues, Hwang's novel "posits an alternative spatial figuration of national space and, in turn, of agency, responsibility, and belonging," one that challenges Korean nationalist narratives that would characterize the suffering brought by the Korean War as caused primarily by foreign "guests" that had infected the country and to insist on how Koreans both at home and in the diaspora are implicated in its violence (86).

Worlds of Complicity, Part I: The People's Republic of China

While Watson and Ryu both emphasize what the former terms the "radically localized epistemology" conveyed by *The Guest*, the novel still highlights the contact nebulae that connected Japan and China to the peninsula, alluding, for instance, to how the Marxist transculturation of working-class Koreans occurred as many of them joined Chinese Communists in their fight against the Japanese empire. Ha Jin's *War Trash* explores this connection from the opposite direction, illuminating the Korean War's significance for the People's Republic of China (PRC), which was actually the external power that sent the largest number of troops to Korea. This work conveys how the

PRC viewed its intervention as a decisive victory in which it successfully repelled an imperialist invasion that sought to bring regime change to an ally whose leaders had fought with the Chinese People's Army in Manchuria.[4] It offers a critical view of this triumphalist narrative, however, since it is told from the perspective of Chinese POWs who were treated as outcasts – as "war trash" – upon their return home. More broadly, however, this novel is critical of how the multitude of Chinese soldiers that were sent to Korea were treated as "war trash" by military commanders whose "human wave" tactics assumed that a tremendous number of soldiers would be sacrificed in each battle.

In focusing on the plight of Chinese POWs, the novel also highlights the issue that became the primary point of contention in the peace talks that took place during the final two years of the conflict: whether POWs would simply be repatriated, as stipulated by the Geneva Conventions and the Communist position, or allowed to choose the country to which they would be sent upon their release from the camps, the US/UN position. Ultimately, the latter option prevailed, and much to the embarrassment of the PRC, as many more POWs than had been expected chose to go to Taiwan.

The protagonist and narrator of *War Trash* is Yu Yuan, a member of the Chinese People's Army in Korea who spends much of the conflict as a POW, and who recounts those experiences in a memoir he is writing decades later. What transpires in the prison camps is a kind of civil war in miniature. The most egregious acts take place in the ones that are essentially run by Nationalist POWs who engage in a campaign of terror aimed at coercing People's Army soldiers like Yuan to renounce the PRC. Many of them, including Yuan, have their bodies forcibly tattooed with anticommunist slogans which would make them objects of suspicion upon repatriation. In one scene, a particularly sadistic leader commands his men to carve these tattoos from the bodies of Communist soldiers who insist on returning to the PRC and murders one of them – the most outspoken – in front of the others. These Nationalist overseers are likened to the rabidly anticommunist leaders like Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek whose repressive regimes enjoyed the robust support of the US military (Jin 2005: 68).

War Trash depicts the PRC leadership in the camps in terms that resonate with the critical perspective on the Chinese state expressed in much of Jin's writing. Though Yuan evinces some admiration for the egalitarian ideals of Marxism, he becomes increasingly disillusioned with how internal

4 For Chinese perspectives on the war, see Jung 2015.

Communist Party politics exert their influence even in the camps, inciting captured commanding officers to exhort their men to futile acts of rebellion that leave many dead or disfigured by injuries.

In the novel's final pages, however, Yuan expands his account of those who have been victimized by the PRC to include the people of Korea who thus emerge as a final referent of the novel's title:

> As it was, the Koreans had taken the brunt of the destruction of this war, whereas we Chinese were here mainly to keep its flames away from our border . . . It was true that the Koreans had started the war themselves, but a small country like theirs could only end up being a battleground for bigger powers. Whoever won this war, Korea would be a loser. (301)

Worlds of Complicity, Part II: Korea, Vietnam, and the United States

Our discussion thus far has traced how *The Guest* and *War Trash* illuminate the contact nebulae that link Korea to China and Japan but in ways that highlight how the complex processes of transculturation that Thornber identifies with that concept are also entangled with structures of empire – how they can take shape through what Hwang terms the "delicate chains of war" (2005: 8). The relevance of such works, specifically for readers in East Asia, thus stems from the ways in which they highlight aspects of the Korean War that they might not want to face – atrocities committed by countrymen and the hidden victims of such violence. *The Guest* and *War Trash* evoke a discomfiting web of regional complicity in the devastation that was unleashed during that conflict.

As novels that circulate in English, however, works like *The Guest* and *War Trash* invite readers in the West – and particularly those in the United States – to view how they too are implicated in "the delicate chains of war." Early reviewers of *War Trash* were not wrong to see the novel as taking a critical stance toward the United States as well. After all, its first sentence reads "Below my navel stretches a long tattoo that says 'FUCK . . . U. . .. S . . .'" (Jin 2005: 3), a sentiment that the ordinarily phlegmatic Yuan comes quite close to expressing in one crucial scene. In it he confronts a US General with his country's culpability for the acts committed by Nationalists in the camps: "Those prison chiefs were trained in Japan and Taiwan, and then sent back by your government to help you run the camp. They murdered and beat us at will. Isn't the American government responsible for their crimes?" (179).

Overall the camps themselves, as sites of intra-ethnic conflict that are literally ringed by US military forces, emerge as allegories for the Cold War policy of containment that intensified the violence of the civil wars that erupted in countries like Korea and Vietnam.

Even *The Guest*, which takes great pains to identify the perpetrators of the war crimes committed in Sinch'on as Korean, accords a measure of responsibility to the US military forces that were nearby when the atrocities took place. It carefully delineates the movements and actions of American soldiers who were in the region when the massacre took place and provided some of the weapons that were used. While *The Guest* does not issue a direct indictment of them, this omission mirrors the nature of their crime. Their guilt stems not from something evil they have done, but from the catastrophe they enabled by doing nothing. This should lead us to reconsider the allegorical function played by the Ryu brothers in *The Guest* to include not only those to whom they are linked by ethnicity but also those to whom they are linked by citizenship: i.e., Americans.

While the very notion of world literature is premised on moving beyond any narrowly nationalist framework, it is important nonetheless to acknowledge that whatever worlding took place after 1945 (or after 2001, for that matter) has been shaped to a significant degree by the exigencies of US foreign policy – by American empire – and works like the ones we address here forward a criticism of that nation's actions. One recurrent strategy that progressive US writers and intellectuals have used to voice such critique is to make use of a Vietnam War analogy. This is apparent from the groundbreaking scholarship of Bruce Cumings, the preeminent historian of modern Korea, who often makes this comparison in order to convey the basic illegitimacy of the US decision to intervene.[5] It is also evident in the opening of Susan Sontag's *On Photography* where she wonders what the reaction of the American public would have been if it "had been confronted with photograph evidence of the devastation of Korea, an ecocide and genocide in some respects even more thorough than those inflicted on Vietnam a decade later" (1973: 18). The aptness of this analogy became especially apparent with the publication in 1999 of a Pulitzer Prize-winning series of articles by a team of Associated Press reporters that uncovered a massacre that had taken place during the early days of the Korean War. In July 1950 US soldiers had fired on a group of civilians who had taken shelter in a pair of railroad tunnels near the village of No Gun Ri after having been subjected to a strafing attack by US

5 See, for instance, the first chapter of Cumings's *The Korean War: A History* (2010).

military planes. Hundreds were killed in an incident that seemed to prefigure the infamous events that took place in My Lai during the Vietnam War.

The white Southern novelist Jayne Anne Phillips based her novel *Lark and Termite* in part on this event, a work whose magical realism suggests an aesthetic transculturalism akin to the one deployed by Hwang in *The Guest*. Although Phillips's novel borrows as much from Faulkner as it does from García Márquez, it draws as well from the cosmology of Korean folk traditions. *Lark and Termite* recreates the events of No Gun Ri from the perspective of a corporal in the US Army, Bobby Leavitt, who ends up being shot and killed by his fellow soldiers along with hundreds of Korean civilians. In Leavitt, Phillips invents a figure who seems an imaginary forerunner to Hugh Thompson, Jr., the US helicopter pilot who intervened during the My Lai massacre. While the experiences of this character are depicted sympathetically by a narrator who records his thoughts and memories, the novel wholly dismantles the notion that he and other US soldiers who had ostensibly come to the aid of the Koreans were acting as their protectors. As Leavitt is helping lead a group of villagers along a railroad track prior to the massacre he observes, "The refugees need no urging; it's their civil war, their homes and lands lost, he's merely a conductor. No savior here" (2010: 20).

A major part of this novel focuses on the people that Leavitt left behind in West Virginia, tracing how the war's violence has reverberated in the lives of working-class white Americans who lost husbands, fathers, and sons in the fighting. Despite this emphasis, the novel is laudable for how it depicts its Korean characters as animated not by a gratitude for US military intervention, as US Cold War ideologies would insist, but by a murderous rage over what American soldiers had done to their country.

When we place *Lark and Termite* alongside two South Korean novels – Hwang Sok-Yong's *The Shadow of Arms* (1994) and An Chŏng-hyo's *White Badge* (1989) – we can see how the Vietnam War analogy functions quite differently in another national context. These last two works were written by authors who had actually served during the Vietnam War and An's protagonist discerns echoes of the suffering that Korean civilians experienced during their war in that of the Vietnamese he encounters. Both novels suggest that South Korean soldiers functioned in Vietnam as basically a mercenary force: in exchange for the participation of such soldiers, who were infamous for their brutality, the United States provided significant aid to the dictatorship of Park Chung-Hee, whose authoritarian rule enabled that country to rise as a significant economic and military power (see Armstrong 2001 and Lee

2009).[6] Disentangling the contact nebulae in which the Korean War is enmeshed thus requires not only looking back on how the peninsula's history was shaped by the formidable cultural, political, and military power of China and Japan but also looking forward to South Korea's ascendance as a regional power in East and Southeast Asia. Jin-kyung Lee characterizes South Korea's role in the Vietnam War as an episode of "submilitarism" that "firmly placed South Korea on track for its rise as a subimperial nation, in a matter of two decades, not only through the economic benefit it derived from the war but also through its forging of intimate political and economic relations with the U.S." (2007: 677).

The Humanitarian Reader and the Angel of History in *The Surrendered*

Much of the affective force of the novel we turn to last – Chang-rae Lee's *The Surrendered* (2010) – derives from its critique of the imperial aspirations that shaped the US decision to intervene in Korea. Its critical energies are principally focused on the framework of humanitarianism that has linked the two countries. As Sahr Conway-Lanz has observed, the Korean War was "the first armed conflict in which the United States attempted to live up to the human rights and humanitarian standards newly institutionalized" in the four new Geneva Conventions that were signed by forty-five nations in 1949 (2005: 50). While US military forces made efforts to adhere to these conventions, which comprised "the first codification of international law on the wartime treatment of civilian populations, including refugees," their attempt to do so, Conway-Lanz asserts, "was a troubled one, with a heavy human cost" (51). Exemplifying the tragic inadequacies of such efforts, he asserts, was the massacre that took place at No Gun Ri, the event fictionalized in Phillips's *Lark and Termite* (56).

On the cultural front, humanitarian narratives were also a vital part of what Christina Klein has termed a Cold War Orientalism: the narratives that circulated in US popular culture at mid-century depicted Koreans and other Asians as objects of sentimental and often humanitarian care whose integration into the global order the United States was seeking to forge was an urgent matter of national security, thereby promoting, in other words, a militarized form of transculturation. American cinematic and journalistic narratives about the Korean War often lionized US soldiers and humanitarian

6 See Armstrong; J. Lee and chapter 5 of Nguyen.

aid workers as the saviors and protectors of civilians who were often figured as orphans.[7] The disturbing power of Lee's novel derives in part from its corrosive remobilization of these popular narratives. Its three protagonists resemble a triptych of stock characters from such depictions: June is a young Korean girl who is orphaned during the war, and the other two protagonists are Hector and Sylvie, a soldier and a missionary. *The Surrendered* offers to readers humanitarian protagonists with whom they *cannot not* identify and then disfigures the sympathies it elicits. It also features a Korean orphan who disrupts whatever sentimental attachment readers might harbor for her, for she turns out not to be the grateful object of humanitarian largesse but a subject of vengeful violence.

To understand the humanitarian schema of readerly identification that Lee's novel elicits and devastatingly frustrates, it is instructive to turn to a distinction that Joseph R. Slaughter's makes in his essay "Humanitarian Reading" between two different paradigms. He argues against one model of humanitarian sympathy which assumes upon the reader's part a heroic capacity to identify with a suffering stranger because it tends toward "the cultivation of a noblesse oblige of the powerful (rights holders) toward the powerless (those who cannot enact their human rights) that ultimately reconfirms the liberal reader as the primary and privileged subject of human rights and the benefactor of humanitarianism" (2009: 104).[8] In contrast, he advocates a more modest conception of how readers' sympathies are triangulated via "the agent of humanitarian assistance" who is not individually heroized but simply registers as "a position in a grammar of relief that may be occupied by anyone who disregards nationality in the face of human suffering" (99). Lee's novel, however, operationalizes both axes of identification, offering up the suffering subject, the war orphan, as well as the humanitarian agents, the soldier and the missionary, as sites of sympathetic investment but then absolutely disfigures the psychic investments in these characters it has elicited.

Sylvie, who runs the orphanage in which June finds refuge soon after the war, is revealed to be a war orphan herself. Her parents, missionaries and humanitarian workers, had ministered to civilians in Manchuria in the

7 See, for instance, the films *One Minute to Zero* (1952) and *Battle Hymn* (1959).

8 Slaughter's argument is built through a careful reading of Henry Dunant's *A Memory of Solferino*, which he characterizes as "one of the most objectively successful of humanitarian interventionist narratives in history, precipitating both the incorporation of the Red Cross and the first Geneva Convention" (2009: 90–91). This work also plays a key role in *The Surrendered*, which I explore more fully elsewhere.

1930s. They had been murdered in front of her by Japanese soldiers for harboring Benjamin Li, a Chinese insurgent who had worked as a teacher at their mission. Their shared trauma is what brings Sylvie and June together, but their intimacy is saturated with an eroticism and linked with the latter's opiate addiction in way that suggest its unseemly and exploitative nature. Moreover, Sylvie has stoked June's fantasy of being adopted by her, but she eventually acquiesces to her husband's concerns that the girl has simply been too damaged by her experiences to be suitable. Denied the possibility of becoming a grateful orphan, June erupts in a vengeful and self-immolating rage. She sets fire to the orphanage in a suicide attempt, which she ends up surviving but that takes the life of her beloved Sylvie.

Hector's life, both during the war and in the decades after, is punctuated by moments of violence that take the lives of those he cares for most. Not only is he impotent to save them, he is convinced that it was his proximity that brought them in harm's way. He does, however, succeed in becoming an angel of mercy of sorts in the closing pages of the novel, which take place in the 1980s, when he comforts the adult June as she is dying of cancer. He enables her to take her final breaths falsely believing she has achieved a reconciliation with her estranged son, which he has stage-managed. Hector's final gesture of generosity thus entails a good dose of deception, even of betrayal. But in the moral universe Lee depicts, however, this is as good as it gets. Not only are all motivations – even altruistic ones – shown to be impure but so are the gestures in which they culminate.

The figure in the novel that readers ultimately end up resembling most is Benjamin Li, the Chinese insurgent who was tortured by Japanese soldiers in front of Sylvie shortly before being executed:

> When the [Japanese] officer stepped back Benjamin's eyes were bloodied; they looked as if they had been gouged out. But the officer roughly wiped them with his sleeve and it was clear what he had done: he had cut away only the eyelids. The eyes themselves were intact, the orbs monstrous, for being so exposed. His was a fleshy skull. They retied his hands so that they were secured behind his back. (Lee 2010: 230–31)

In the family name that is given to this figure, Li, which is a homonym for the author's own, Lee, the novel suggests his own positionality. His surname, Benjamin, however suggests a sardonic reference to another

author,[9] who famously described the angel of history in terms that resonate with the scene from *The Surrendered* cited above:

> A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. (257)

Ultimately Benjamin's is the only viable ethical position to which *The Surrendered* allows its readers to cling.

To the extent that this novel speaks to readers in Asia, it turns their faces toward an acknowledgment of their complicity in the chain of violence that has long entangled their region, which has not only set country against country but countrymen against countrymen. Insofar as this work is addressed to readers in the United States, moreover, it turns their faces to the past to confront a war that their country has largely forgotten, demanding that they perceive the chain of events that leads from then to now as a single catastrophe. In confronting the wreckage that has been the result of their country's attempts to function as angels of mercy in the multiple wars it has engaged in since 1950, the novel asserts that whatever humanitarian justifications have been made for such interventions, they have brought the most tragic of unintended consequences to those that Americans have ostensibly tried to save – breeding in them not gratitude and love but their opposite, making them into wayward angels of vengeance.

Coda

This chapter has identified a number of literary works that take the Korean War as a point of departure for evoking the forces of transculturation – which have often taken shape through empire and military violence – that have shaped East Asia. These forces have been the expression of not only regional asymmetries of power, but global ones. Preeminent in the latter are the ongoing attempts by the United States to exert its hegemonic force in "small" places like the Korean peninsula. In "reveal[ing] an event of global history from a radically localized epistemology," as Watson puts it, these works also demand that readers shuttle between regional, national, and global frames of

9 I would like to thank James Kim for pointing out the resonances of this character's name.

reference (2014: 80). As such, they speak to Sanja Bahun's assertion that world literature itself should be recognized as an ongoing and essentially "unfinished project" – that "the phenomenon of 'world literature' simultaneously takes on multiple guises, appears on multiple scales, implies crossings of variegated categories, implicates semantic and affective networks both internal and external to itself" (2011: 373, 374).[10]

The scalar shifts operationalized by these novels are entangled, moreover, with ones that are temporal, providing further frames of reference for the contemporary as Debjani Ganguly has elaborated them. At the most basic level, these works speak to a continuity that has been forcefully stated by Andrew Hammond – who notes the material and ideological links between the "campaign against the 'axis of evil' and the Cold War opposition to the 'evil empire'" (2011: 1) – a continuity whose persistence is unevenly distributed. For if the Cold War lives on figuratively for much of the world, it does so more literally for some. The continuing ramifications of the Cold War and the existential threat it poses to the roughly 70 million residents of the two Koreas become especially apparent as tensions between them rise or fall, processes in which the United States and China are ever implicated as well, usually in sync with changes in leadership.

The point here is not simply to add the Korean War and novels concerning it as data points that need to be assimilated into our critical calculus. What is salutary about these works more broadly is that they invite an approach to thinking about the relationship of literature and history kindred to the one that Vilashini Coopan has offered of world literary networks that constellate around events of "foundational violence" – networks that

> are dense with memory: the memory of the event, the textual memories of the forms through which those events are told, and even the modality of memory as itself a kind of networked movement, sometimes in the style of a *longue durée* and other times more something that rubs up against the immediacy of an event, causing one time to touch another instantaneously, in a shock or flash. (2011: 201)

It is hoped that the network – or novelistic contact nebula, to return to Thornber's formulation – addressed here contributes to an understanding of

> a comparative world literature in which the world is not some abstract global space, but rather, one that emerges from the intersecting and overlapping

10 Additionally, these novels – along with related works like Toni Morrison's *Home* and Susan Choi's *The Foreign Student* – are also legible as powerful expressions of what Shu-mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet have termed "minor transnationalism."

> histories of racial capitalism, racialized subjects, and racial-imperial regimes of terror. This is not the world but a world, one whose foundational violence is central to the emergence of what we call modernity and perhaps to that particular technology of modernity known as the novel. (202)

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20

French Colonial Literature in Indochina: Colonial Adventure and Continental Drift

LESLIE BARNES

> You can't imagine what it means: that feeling of being penned in by destiny, by something you can't escape or change, something that weighs on you like a prison regulation; the certainty that you will do *this* and nothing else, and when you die you will have been *that* man and no other, and what you haven't had already you will never have . . . I *wanted* . . . to leave my mark upon the map of Asia.
>
> *(André Malraux,* The Royal Way*, 1930)*

Standing on the edge of the Cambodian forest, which promises the wealth and power they desire, the two protagonists of André Malraux's *La Voie royale* (*The Royal Way*), Vannec and Perken, embody the spirit of early twentieth-century colonial adventure. Vannec aims not only to discover and make his fortune on the lost archeological riches of Angkor, but equally important, to escape "the drab and dusty life" he observes around him at home ([1930] 1989: 56). Perken, having spent years among the free tribes of Indochina, but for whom time is running out, seeks to leave his mark, to transcend his finitude by penetrating the most remote corners of the colony and claiming domain for himself there. One of multiple "colonial personalities" – individualist, ambitious, future-oriented men of action and purpose – the adventurer joins the colonial administrator and his predecessor, the conqueror, on the pages of French colonial-exotic novels in a spiritual quest to civilize the savage peoples of the world and to capture and exploit their untapped resources (Betts 1975: 29; Loutfi 1971: 99).

Civilization and material gain – the intersecting aims of the colonizer. A "phase in the spatialization of the world by a capitalism that has yet to live out its history," colonialism sought to remake the world around Europe as its moral, spiritual, and economic center (Dirlik 2002: 430).[1] For French literary

1 The façade of the Palais de la Porte Dorée, originally built for the Colonial Exposition of 1931 and today home to the National Museum of the History of Immigration, is

critics of the period, colonial-exotic literature was the "defense and illustration" of the Republic's colonial ideology – a manifesto, or artistic declaration of the motives and directions of empire. In the early part of the twentieth century, and particularly in the wake of World War I, its primary aim was to build a colonial consciousness among the French people, who, as reluctant imperialists, had yet to identify with the colonial project (Lebel 1931: 37).[2] The mission to legitimize *la plus grande France* – the world of French empire, the world *as* French empire – demanded an authentic, concise, almost scientific representation of colonial peoples – their practices, lived realities, and moral conventions – at the service of a broader, Eurocentric interrogation of French male subjectivity in the world (Lebel 1931: 71).[3] These colonial heroes, be they empire builders driven by ideological commitment or nonconformists pursuing opportunities unavailable in the metropole, follow the relatively fixed trajectories of expansion and speculation. Theirs is an experience of acceleration toward specific ends, namely the spatial ordering of the world in terms of center and margin and the establishment of new markets within these marginal spaces to bolster the flagging center.[4] The narratives that recount their exploits unfold within

a remarkable visual manifestation of France's economic aims overseas. At the center of the bas relief is the Marianne, the symbol of the French Republic. Surrounding her are the peoples of the French colonies, each laboring to send her their resources. Within the context of the Exposition, itself an event designed to create imperialists out of the French, the goal of the façade is to emphasize the material gains of the colonial project.

2 I use the term colonial-exotic to insist on the ideological, formal, and thematic continuities between early exotic literature such as that made famous by Pierre Loti and the twentieth-century colonial manifestations that responded to new global political realities and reflected a stylistic shift toward ethnographic documentation and away from the florid, melancholy prose of the nineteenth century. In referring to it as a "defense and illustration," Lebel is aligning the genre with Joachim Du Bellay's sixteenth-century manifesto for the richness and exactitude of French, alongside Greek and Latin, in literary expression. Both projects link a specific national mission with the inherent cultural and political *grandeur* of France; in the colonial context, France's destiny is also linked to a racial superiority.

3 Elsewhere I have focused on the formal and thematic proximity between colonial exoticism and the early existential writings of André Malraux, who draws on conventions of the genre to extend this interrogation to man's place in the universe. See Barnes (2014).

4 Pierre Brocheux and Daniel Heméry observe in their history of the colony that France's relative late entry into international trade was among the most significant factors contributing to the invasion of Indochina post-1850. The French associated unfettered access to Chinese markets with commercial growth and deemed control of the Mekong and the Vietnamese ports in the South China Sea as instrumental to ensuring this access (2001: 17, 32). But France was not just flagging economically. As early as the late nineteenth century, and especially in the wake of World War I, the French saw empire building as, in General Herbert Lyautey's words, a form of purification "through hard work" and a means "to pull the French race out of the mud . . . get it going again" (cited in Loutfi 1971: 88).

the premeditated temporality of capitalist accumulation. And while these trajectories do not preclude detour or misadventure, the rational logic of expansion and speculation necessarily assumes a return to the path forward, the path leading to the realization of these predetermined ends.

Not every French colonial-exotic novel evinces such a temporality, however. Against the current of colonial capitalism, I would like to examine here a literary temporality of pure detour, that of continental drift. Continental drift is Alfred Wegner's controversial 1912 explanation of the movement of landmasses, the wandering of the poles, the subsequent shifts in climate patterns, and the distribution of ancient plant and animal species. Colonization, for Pheng Cheah, conceives of the world in primarily spatial terms (2016: 2). Continental drift, on the other hand, presents the world as a temporal category insofar as the contemporary – or any – spatial configuration of the planet appears as a function of geologic time and is not moving toward a predetermined end but is, instead, constantly making and unmaking the earth's surface. Continental drift names a deviation from the fixed path and offers an alternative conceptualization of the world under the sign of *la dérive*, that is, the uncalculated traveling of bodies, human and geographic, in response to currents, vortexes, and the contours of terrain. If adventure is active, continental drift is reactive. If speculation implies linear progression, continental drift floats without purpose and against reason; continents, megacontinents, and supercontinents form and break apart with no regard for – as if in defiance of – human technologies of time and calculation.

This chapter examines the contrasting spatio-temporalities of colonial adventure and continental drift in French Indochinese colonial-exotic literature of the 1920s and 1930s. Drawing on Cheah's insights in *What Is a World?*, my interest is in exploring what kind of world(s) this literature makes and unmakes. To do this, I will look first at the ways in which Indochinese colonial-exotic novels of the period, as Spivak has observed, "world" the colony in the construction of a colonialist worldview (1985). These novels world in a narrow, linear sense, discursively mapping the spatialized colony in concert with imperialist projections (Cheah 2016: 10–11). As such, I will pay special attention to the ways in which they chart the advance of capital through the colony as a spatial category, a distant and subordinate appendage of France, the global center. I will then consider Jean d'Esme's *Les Dieux rouges* (*The Red Gods: A Romance*, 1923) as a deviation from the conventions of the genre and the calculated path it lays out. Equal parts colonial-exotic and speculative fiction, *Les Dieux rouges* tells an alternative geological history of continental drift that undoes the colonizer's materialist assumptions about

the natural world. Through the creation of a parallel, prehistoric world inside the colony but outside the reach of empire, D'Esme's novel demonstrates a profound dis-ease with the colonial project, an anxiety that, unlike the hesitation that marked many narratives of the period, points to France's ultimate inability to *map* Indochina – physically, temporally, or epistemologically – and by extension, the rest of *la plus grande France*. *Les Dieux rouges* worlds the colony in the Heideggerian sense by opening up an alternative temporality within it, by imagining, in Cheah's words, "a force that subtends and exceeds all human calculations that reduce the world as temporal structure to the sum of objects in space" (2016: 8). The novel returns the colonizer to the beginning of human time and the human race, not to imply simply that colonialism is a regression, but to challenge the ontological and political realities upon which imperialist assumptions are based.

Les Dieux rouges is, of course, an unlikely title to merit the label world literature as David Damrosch and others have defined it. Not only has colonial-exotic literature fallen into critical and popular oblivion, its status as a *literary* genre in France having eroded over the years as a result of the politics of canonization, but apart from one 1924 American translation, this particular novel has seen no "world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin" (Damrosch 2003: 6). Neither literary nor worldly, *Les Dieux rouges* has failed to enter into circulation and has thus gained few, if any, of the new inflections that translation and variable ways of reading can impart.[5] It has been all but forgotten, along with most of the rest of the genre. D'Esme's novel would further fail to meet the criteria of Cheah's own definition of world literature insofar as the latter appears to be reserved for contemporary anglophone postcolonial novels that imagine resistance to the nefarious effects of certain global initiatives in former English colonies. And yet, *Les Dieux rouges* not only figures the world as a temporal category; it opens within it an unexpected "normative ethicopolitical horizon" within which the relations of man to nature, man to man, and center to margin circle back and return to a common point of origin (Cheah 2016: 6).

The Colonial World: Mapping Indochina

One among many early twentieth-century cultural representations of the French to the French, colonial-exotic literature was a "doctrine of action . . .

5 The novel's lack of circulation has meant that the 1924 translation is unavailable in Australia; unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

an act of faith" that aimed to create colonizers of a reluctant people by narrating France's radiant influence in the remote corners of the world (Lebel 1931: 172). To this end, colonial-exotic authors of the period were urged, as Paul Morand noted in 1923 – the same year Malraux arrived in Indochina and D'Esme published *Les Dieux rouges* – to "establish new relations – rigorous and consistent – for ourselves and for others, between our country and the rest of the universe" (cited in Copin 1996: 52). These "new relations" were, of course, still those of a superior race guiding an inferior one – the project had to be justified – and the commitment to rigor translated discursively into epistemological constructions that valued the colony in spatial terms – a border to be crossed, an expanse to be traversed, a depth to be penetrated and, of course, enlightened. These narratives outline an imperialist geography of the colony; they "world" in Spivak's sense, shaping the colonial world as an object to be consumed by metropolitan readers.

The conception of the world as a spatial category, as a territory to be discovered, identified, and incorporated, is reflected in a narrative fascination with the various physical landscapes emerging before the colonial hero and the effects of these spaces on the hero. Majestic and menacing, colonial landscapes include gardens, waterways, valleys, mountains, and the formidable forest. Indochinese colonial-exotic novels often open with the passage to the colonies followed by a description of the scenery – be it urban or other – and the narratives regularly return to the land as an external manifestation of the narrator or character's inner experience, which varies from intoxicated wonder to benevolent curiosity to angst and a sense of self-dissolution. Herbert Wild's *L'Autre Race* (The Other Race, [1930] 2000), for example, opens on an idyllic locale of distant plains and meandering streams, emerald rice patties and clusters of graceful bamboo (8–9). It is a perfect backdrop for the chance meeting of the two enamored protagonists, Versoix, a Frenchman, and Séi, a tribal woman. In Georges Groslier's *La Route du plus fort* (*The Road of the Strong*, [1925] 1997), Hélène's hidden passion for Ternier, the hero, comes to life in the explosion of colors and shapes surrounding her: "a horizon of greenery . . . brilliant hibiscus flowers, tufts of yellow and red cannas . . . the white flowering amaryllis . . . cacti spotted with blooms, a jasmine bush . . . this is where men truly live while the rest of us suffer" (28).

The men traversing these spaces are empire builders, whether the kingdom they seek to develop is that of the nation or of their own design. Many of these heroes are civil engineers whose mission is to link the inland extremities with the colonial ports and the French capital. The narrator of Henry Daguerche's *Le Kilomètre 83* (Kilometer 83, [1913] 1996) is part of a team tasked

with establishing a rail line in Cambodia, while in Groslier's *Le Retour à l'argile* (*Return to Clay*, [1928] 1996), Rollin must build a bridge over the Prèk Thnot river. Ternier's mission in *La Route du plus fort* is to build a "great road" to bring the automobile, among other industries, to "the further-most regions of northern Cambodia . . . southern Laos . . . [and] the northeastern provinces of Siam" (Groslier 1925: 47). For Henri Copin, Ternier is a man "who lives his life in devotion to his mission, to the roads that link beings, bring villages into the world, open up economies." This is the "colonizing power of France" the novel celebrates.[6]

At the other end of the spectrum, we find men who take advantage of such infrastructure projects, or who just as frequently strike out on their own, to establish commerce. These men, like Versoix, who is traversing the Lang-Sa basin in search of "species of desirable woods that can be easily accessed and extracted via the river," encounter the colony as a source of personal wealth (Wild 1995: 20). In a similar vein, the protagonist of Wild's *Le Conquérant* (The Conqueror, [1925] 1995) is a man who, like Malraux's Vannec, cannot tolerate the dusty quietude of metropolitan life. His arrival in the colony is motivated by little other than the possibility of financial gain: "I plan to do whatever is most worth my while. I'm considering mining because I've done some study in this area, and because Tonkin is a mining country. But if need be, I'd happily get into coffee growing . . . I've heard it's very lucrative . . . big returns and success practically guaranteed" (477). The figure of the weathered adventurer-speculator reaches its apogee in Eugène Pujarniscle's *Le Bonze et le pirate* (The Monk and the Pirate, [1931] 2000), where Réclavier is "not an individual, but a type – the unrepentant conquistador, the bush-man (*broussailleux*) who wants to know nothing and for whom the colony remains what it was the day after it was conquered: a virgin land where one comes to make his fortune . . . where only the European has rights, and where he has them all" (8).

These colonial conquerors – civilizers, creators of new markets – encounter the isolated and at times hostile terrain as an obstacle to expansion, a threat to the accomplishment of their will and to their own physical and mental integrity. Here, the narrative preoccupation with the Indochinese forest, in both its splendor and its putrefaction, is most manifest. These novels create constellations of natural elements in excess – "all the leaves, all the seeds, all the thorns, all the branches, all the bark" (Daguerches [1913] 1996: 118) – constellations that mimic the imposing, indefinite vegetal mass surrounding their protagonists.

6 See the back cover of the English translation.

The novels' attention to the overwhelming size of the forest and the overabundance of life within it is matched only by their fixation on its unrelenting decay, the "foul virulence" that looms, portending the demise of both man and his mission (Malraux [1930] 1989: 101). The success of these heroes, then, in a recurring trope that reflects the undercurrent of doubt in the European's superiority found in many colonial-exotic narratives, necessitates that they master the terrain and destroy indiscriminately – flora, fauna, natives, countrymen, loved ones, themselves. "Can you be sure that your road tramples nothing?" the omniscient narrator of *La Route du plus fort* asks Ternier. "No, you cannot . . . Your road crosses this land and, like an arrow, strikes its heart . . . And no matter how gently you lay your hands on the world, no matter the redemptive certainties that you pour into it – you kill. There's nothing to be done, I'll give you that. But know that you kill" ([1925] 1997: 226–28). Despite the avowed purpose of colonial-exotic literature and the relative success of the colonial administrator/adventurer's speculation in its pages, there is a sense in many of these novels that in the end, the vegetation will prevail: "We will never leave the forest," announce the first lines of Jules Boissière's "Dans la forêt" ("In the Forest," Boissière 1909). "The somber, indefinite forest stretching from the Tonkinese Delta to the to the immeasurable, floating border of the Kouang-Si, we will never again leave it. We're marked to die here" (9).

For Copin, horror is a "remote province" of colonial-exotic literature; its presence reveals a deep and troubled attraction to the cruelty of Indochina, which takes form not only in a narrative preoccupation with the forest and its savage men, but also in a fearful reverence for the fantastic mysteries lurking within urban and provincial spaces alike.[7] The vicious pirate of Pujarniscle's *Le Bonze et le pirate* is one human manifestation of this horror; his delight in "the many forms of human pain" terrorizes the novel's protagonist ([1931] 2000: 81). In *La Bouche scellée* (The Sealed Mouth, [1931] 1998), a novel whose fantastic elements Copin has compared to Maupassant, Pujarniscle tortures his treasure-hungry protagonist with a malevolent genie, creating a world in which the price of colonial fortune is man's reason. Like Pujarniscle's work, the novel to which I now turn blends the speculative and the exotic in an exploration of the deep-seated fears of colonial society. Unlike the novels I have discussed thus far, however, D'Esme's *Les Dieux rouges* unmakes the colonial world by opening within it another world where colonialism has yet to take hold, not simply because the colonizer has yet to pacify a rebel

7 See the postface to *La Bouche scellée*.

territory, though this is certainly true for the novel's protagonists, but because this world precedes colonialism and will succeed it. D'Esme's Red Gods inhabit a world that exists and that is accessed temporally rather than spatially, a world that, as a temporal category, "subtends and disrupts the [spatial] calculations" of colonial expansion, integration, and accumulation (Cheah 2016: 18).

A Prehistoric Crevice: Unmapping Indochina

It would not be difficult to read *Les Dieux rouges* as another example of a French discursive imperialism that maps Indochina through the physical penetration and partial taming of its unconquered hinterlands. Ideologically consistent with other novels of the period, it reproduces the same clichés and stereotypes, particularly surrounding the novel's ethnic minorities and, to a lesser extent, majority populations, who are figured as primitive and backward, a puzzling hindrance to civilization and empire. Its narrative voice also echoes the postwar commitment to rigor and descriptive accuracy in the framing of the main narrative: "There, I've finished . . . I've left nothing out: not a single detail, not a single word. I've scrupulously recreated it all" ([1923] 2001: 18). And yet there is something about D'Esme's novel that suggests a deviation from the usual approach. As I noted above, this is hardly the first colonial novel to doubt France's mission in Indochina. But where others mock French attempts to master the inscrutable, apologize for an indigenous cultural purity sullied by contact with the West, and bemoan the de-civilization of the European by his very civilizing mission, D'Esme is alone in revealing an "alternative cartography" within which colonial advancement is not only stopped, but burnt to cinders, skinned alive (Cheah 2016: 17).[8] D'Esme's *Moï* tribes resist French subjugation just as they have resisted others before them:

8 References to the futility of France's mission to *know* the East abound in this body of literature. For D'Esme, the colonizers "who've come here with our European souls and our conqueror's mentality, none of our kind are able to understand this race" ([1923] 2001: 30); "Everything that surrounds us here, I've already said it, is mysterious and incomprehensible. We fight amongst the trickery, lies, hypocrisies of a hostile race about which we know almost nothing" (71). The protagonists of Groslier and Daguerches are transformed into Memmi's "colonizer[s] who refuse," recoiling before the "detestable" and "monstrously inhuman" influences and relations they observe in the colony (1966: 43; 167). Malraux's Vannec concludes: "In the last analysis, no civilization is ever understood by another one" (1930: 62).

> the Khmers, the Chams, the Laotians, the Cambodians, the Annamites, all, all defeated, squashed on our grounds like greedy insects. We retreated as much as was possible . . . took refuge in the most inaccessible forests, on the steepest mountains. We were once masters of this land, and we fled . . . But we remained independent, we remained the Free People of the Mountains.
>
> ([1923] 2001: 220)

Ruled by a redoubtable sorceress named Jieng, the unconquered tribes of the Laotian hinterland live in the unexplored area surrounding the colonial outpost 32, "the nastiest corner of upper Laos" (28). Destroyed first in a mysterious flood, then in an equally inexplicable fire – accidents that cost the lives of the lieutenants and administrators sent from Saigon – outpost 32 is the destination of the novel's protagonist, Pierre de Lursac, who meets during his maiden river journey into the depths of the Indochinese forest the woman he will decide to marry, Wanda. Upon arrival, the pair is welcomed by Father Ravennes, the weathered missionary, whose proselytization is matched only by his curiosity concerning Jieng's hold over the *Moï* and passion for the abundant archeological marvels of the region. Driven by their desire to expose Jieng's "mysterious religion reserved for women, the secret of which no man will penetrate" (74), the trio enter "the dead zone," an area explicitly forbidden to any man, native or European. There, Lursac and Ravennes discover the geological remnants of Gondwana, one of the two megacontinents of Pangaea, Wegner's supercontinent from the late Paleozoic to the Mezozoic eras, and a tribe of living Cro-Magnon, the Red Gods themselves.

The narration reveals a familiar blend of fear and fascination with the colonial landscapes, both urban and remote, which are alternately gleaming and enveloped in shadow and mist. Lursac's river journey is cast in a gloomy obscurity that attests to Joseph Conrad's influence on the genre. The enormous, gurgling river, "a yellowish mass," drowns everything in its muddy depths; the "great Cambodian forest, deep and mysterious" surrounding it is an immense expanse of stagnation, menace, and disease (35; 36; 84). D'Esme cannot resist foreshadowing in such descriptions the demise of his two protagonists, whose mission to rescue Wanda from Jieng's capture is threatened by the material instability of the very ground they traverse, "covered in a thick layer of leaves, constantly oozing humidity, and giving off the rot of vegetation in bursting, blackish bubbles" (148). The discovery of Gondwana confirms for Ravennes, however, that their expedition is as much temporal as it is spatial, if not more; the further into the "dead zone" they venture, the further back in time they travel. Surrounded by an impossible arrangement of baobabs, brazilwood and California redwoods in the heart of *Moï*

territory, he declares: "this land on which we tread is the same – yes, the same – as that which produced life during the world's great geological epochs. We are going back to the first ages of the world . . . we are living in reverse . . . A formidable slice of the Past has lifted, exposing the first hours of Creation!" (177–78).

Indeed, we might say that D'Esme returns to such spatial tropes in order to supplement them with a temporal conundrum. The encounter between Europe and Asia staged in *Les Dieux rouges* unfolds within a temporality that is simultaneously prehistoric and colonial, for the Gods are serviced by an army of sterile tribeswomen. D'Esme displaces the narrative present of colonial expansion, opens within it a prehistoric temporality that projects a postcolonial future for the Indochinese. The forbidden forest Lursac and Ravennes have entered is a speculative crevice, an imagined world-historical and geological interruption of colonial calculation, "the valley where time stands still" (202). A parallel reality unbeholden to the limits of time and the deep geologic spasms that gave the earth its present physical configuration, this crevice is a temporal (and thus, spatial) parallel, another world inside colonial territory but that is entirely impervious to colonial progress.

More important, this speculative crevice provides the biological fortification of the *Moï* peoples of the region and is the source of their resistance to the French. It is home to the Red Gods, the sons of Ad and first progenitors of the human race (185, 202), who have led there the same existence for 30,000 years. The law of the Red Gods, which is executed by the sorceress Jieng, states that sterile women will become the Gods' "brides for a night" (203). This supernatural impregnation binds the rebellious tribes to the geneses of the human race, endowing their peoples with racial purity and a deep, geological sovereignty that supersedes colonial reach and that will outlive its reign. In her condemnation of the two Frenchmen, whose adventurous discoveries will, according to this law, cost them their lives, Jieng declares of her tribes: "You will be conquered over the centuries, but you will never be slaves. You will one day recover everything that has been taken from you, because the free people of the Forest – the *Moï* people – will not die."

The novel's preoccupation with time is also evident in its structural circularity and narrative framing. From the very start, it creates a temporal simultaneity that situates the narrative action at once at its conclusion and in progress. The prologue begins at the narrative's close, quite literally – the chapters of the book are numbered, but the prologue is titled "the end" – and in media res, with the narrator, Jacques Bressond, standing hesitant before the large teak door of an opium den. The end of the

novel finds Lursac, the protagonist, in front of the same teak door, but days or weeks before Bressond's appearance. As such, it ends before it begins. This is possible because of the principle narrative's framing. At the end of the prologue, when the reader learns that both Bressond and Lursac are dead, D'Esme includes an authorial footnote in which he explains that the tale that follows was found in an envelope labeled "For Jean" among Bressond's affairs at the Western Front in 1917. It is Bressond's transcription of Lursac's experience in the forest, which the latter confesses before killing himself as the two lie in an opium-induced stupor on the floor of the den. The prologue, which is written in the first person – presumably a note found with the text, though this is not specified – recounts Bressond's unexpected encounter with his old friend, unrecognizable after only six months in the forest, and finishes with his promise that the story told here – reconstructed over eight days under the influence of opium, the clairvoyant properties of which allow the narrator to recover each detail – is an accurate reproduction of his story. "Found narratives" are not uncommon in French colonial-exotic literature, as the device allows the author to displace responsibility for the authenticity of the exotic other's representation and sidestep any demands to substantiate the narrative content. In framing the novel this way, D'Esme also anticipates the main narrative's disorienting superposition of past and present and positions it at a sort of double temporal remove: Lursac's tale, including his discovery of the prehistoric crevice, is framed by Bressond's drunken narration, which is itself framed as a discovery on the part of the author. The structure and framing of the novel thus enact the penetrating of a mystery, or, to site Cheah again, "the opening of a world by the incalculable gift of time" (2016: 11).

The Severed Appendage

In his discussion of slavery and the sugar industry in the West Indies, Cheah notes that the colony "is not a world with its own temporalities but an appendage of the Europe-centered world-system that is subject to the temporality of capitalist accumulation" (2016: 223). At the end of *Les Dieux rouges*, after Lursac has escaped the jungle, Ravennes has succumbed to his wounds, and Wanda has been lost to the sorceress Jieng, the colonial outpost 32 is destroyed once again, reduced to ashes. The station relaying Western imperialist temporality to the Laotian hinterlands and connecting the latter to its distant center, as a joint attaches limb to core, is again the site where such relations, and the hierarchy they assume, are severed.

The female hand that is delivered to Lursac as he convalesces in a Saigon hospital, that he strokes gently as he recounts his tale, and that Bressond throws out the window after having completed his transcription, is not merely the price paid for colonial hubris, or that which is taken in exchange for Lursac's having attempted to defy his sentence; it marks the defiant reassertion of an indigenous temporality in the face of colonial expansion. For in her death, Wanda has been initiated into yet another experience of time, that of *la Mort-Lente*, or "the slow death," a technique employed by the Nguyễn dynasty of Vietnam (1802–45) during which, "the flesh is removed from each limb, strip by strip, and then the bones are broken. After that, the victim's stomach is cut open so as to achieve death by the extraction of the bowels. Finally, after the left hand is cut off at the wrist, the limbs are themselves removed. *This left hand is then embalmed and sent to the family of the guilty party, so that they will remember*" (D'Esme [1923] 2001: 205). Wanda's hand is the objectification of colonial time. The physical manifestation of a broken promise, of a failed marriage, the appendage is removed in an undoing of the colonial body. In this, it anticipates Malraux's ruminations, with which this chapter began, about the limits of (French manifest) destiny and the realization that what has not been will not be. When Lursac commits suicide at the end of *Les Dieux rouges*, he acts not just as a man who will never possess the woman he loves, but as the colonizer who has accepted the impossibility of an Indochinese "union." Given Indochina's signal importance in the geopolitical dismemberment of the French empire – as the first colony to fight for and win independence – D'Esme's novel projects France into its postcolonial future by returning the colonizer and colonized to their common point of origin.

This chapter has compared the spatio-temporalities of colonial adventure and continental drift in French Indochinese colonial-exotic literature of the 1920s and 1930s in an effort to examine the ways in which they make and unmake the colonial world. Most of the novels of the period conceive of and construct the colony according to logics of expansion and accumulation, and their protagonists follow fixed linear trajectories in the name of integrating and profiting from colonial spaces. Jean d'Esme's *Les Dieux rouges* offers a departure from the conventions of the genre through its creation of a prehistoric crevice – Gondwana, home to the quaternary man – in the heart of the Indochinese forest. This crevice is a physical and temporal manifestation of continental drift, as is the novel itself, that is, a disruption of such rational calculations. In this novel, the penetration of the Indochinese forest does not represent the advance of civilization into the most remote corners of empire; it is not the deciphering of

a mystery or the mastery of the other through an accumulation of knowledge and the exploitation of resources. On the contrary, the colonial mission, embodied by God (Ravennes) and the state (Lursac), is further unraveled with each step. Though the final pages of the novel suggest that the colonial administration will not so easily abandon its plans for Indochina, by the end, when it returns to a moment prior to its own beginning, it has opened up a world of immanent autonomy, a world in which the colonial appendage might float briefly with the murky current of a Saigon canal before disappearing forever.

And were it not for the irony of history, it would be tempting to read D'Esme's prehistoric crevice as emancipatory, in other words, as a postcolonial recuperation of Indochina by the Vietnamese, the Cambodian, and the Laotian peoples. *Les Dieux rouges* imagines a world outside colonialism, which is to say that it envisions an alternative to capitalism, even as it reminds us that France had no intention of changing course in 1923. After 1954, and throughout the second Indochinese war, when the Americans attempted to reattach the severed appendage, the political project of the region was precisely to ensure the ascendancy of the communist alternative. But history has shown that for millions of Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians, the red gods of communism offered no deliverance. It has also shown the steady advance of global marketization in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. By the end of the novel, D'Esme's Red Gods have fled the crevice, and their leader, blinded by his own unfulfilled desire to possess Wanda, is betrayed and murdered by Jieng and her army of sterile nuns. It is difficult to read this alternative as emancipatory. The novel does not return to a precolonial time to make a postcolonial/postcapitalist world, but rather, to expose the inherent unmaking of the colonial one. Its work is one of negation, its logic one of deviation, and its time one of a geologic measure that defies the map and the calculations it imposes.

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21

From Diasporic Tamil Literature to Global Tamil Literature

SASCHA EBELING

This chapter examines the unique case of the emergence of a new world literature (in the sense of a literary system operating on a global scale), a case that has so far been absent from the recent project of rethinking world literature in the Anglo-American academy and beyond. This new world literature is what I will call "global Tamil literature." The Tamil language, the oldest member of the Dravidian family of languages historically located primarily in the South of India, is one of the longest-surviving classical languages in the world whose literary tradition reaches back over two millennia.[1] Until about the last decade of the twentieth century, "Tamil literature" was generally used to refer to literature produced by the Tamil people of India and Sri Lanka, as well as Tamil speakers in Singapore and Malaysia. Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Tamil literature has transcended this earlier geography. When we consider the different places where Tamil literature is produced and circulated today, it becomes clear that we are no longer dealing with a South Indian or even Asian phenomenon. Tamil authors and readers today live in Paris, Berlin, Uppsala, London, Toronto, Melbourne, and no longer only in South India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Malaysia. Publishing houses and literary magazines have sprouted in France, Great Britain, Germany, Canada, and many other places. Books, newspapers, and magazines produced in India can be bought in Tamil bookstores in Canada, France, or Britain. Furthermore, we must consider the numerous websites, online magazines, and blogs dedicated to Tamil literature, and the fact that Tamil authors and readers follow other literatures from around the world and actively

I would like to thank the Tamil writers who have discussed their work with me, in particular Shobasakthi and Cheran. I am also grateful for the comments that earlier versions of this chapter have received from audiences in Singapore, Paris, Toronto, and Chicago, and to my colleague Whitney M. Cox for his careful reading of an earlier draft.

1 For a brief overview of Tamil's long literary history, see Ebeling 2012; for an extensive treatment of primarily premodern Tamil literature, see Shulman 2016.

participate in larger intellectual debates and aesthetic movements.[2] The resulting picture is one of a truly global flow of words, texts, and ideas. This shift toward what one might call a "global Tamil literature" has only occurred very recently, during approximately the last three decades. The purpose of the present chapter is to examine this new "globality" of Tamil, or the emergence of Tamil literature as a new world literature. In what follows, I will trace in a few broad brushstrokes the history of how Tamil has become "global Tamil" (*ulakattamiḻ*).

We must begin with at least some minimal terminological clarifications. In my use, the term *global* in "global Tamil literature" refers to Tamil literary works that are produced and circulated in different places around the world, that are aware of global political and cultural developments and perspectives, and that are in conversation with other languages outside of South Asia, such as English, Malay, French, or German.[3] What do we mean when we say "Tamil diaspora"? And what do we mean when we speak about its literature? Some understand the term *Tamil diaspora* to refer to all Tamil-speaking people who live outside Tamil's historic cultural homeland in South India. The expression *tāyakam kaṭanta tamiḻ ilakkiyam,* literally "Tamil literature that has gone beyond [its] homeland" – which was the title for an international conference in Singapore in 2011 – is based on such a broad vision. Others prefer to use the term *Tamil diaspora* in a more restricted sense to refer to Sri Lankan Tamils living in exile. Their literature has been called *īḻattup pulampeyar ilakkiyam* ("literature of the Srilankan Tamil diaspora") or *pulampeyarntōr ilakkiyam* ("literature of the displaced"). At any rate, no matter how inclusive or exclusive one would like the term to be, it is important to note that the group of people one might refer to as the "Tamil diaspora" remains internally diverse. Diasporas are always multiple; there is never one single diaspora, if only because people who live away from their real or imagined homelands perceive that situation differently.[4] Moreover, one has

2 The history of the increasing interest of Tamil literature in other literatures, which is one of the characteristics of modern Tamil literature, still remains to be written. I have attempted to chart the beginning of this curiosity and intensified polylogical cultural contact in *Colonizing the Realm of Words* (2010).

3 I disagree with Gayatri Spivak's claim that *globalization* necessarily means "the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere" and do not find that using the term *planetary* presents much of an improvement (2003: 72).

4 Mishra (2006) provides a useful overview of the historical development of diaspora studies and the vicissitudes of the theorizations of the term *diaspora*. My insistence here on using the term diaspora not as a transhistorical and trans-local coverall concept, but rather as always marked by historical and local specificity is based on my own research with diasporic Tamil communities in Germany, France, Canada, and the United States.

to take into account differences of age (e.g., when different generations have differing attitudes to the value of maintaining Tamil culture in a diasporic environment), gender (e.g., when women experience life in exile differently from men),[5] caste, and class, as well as the specificity of the particular historical moments when the migration occurred. Furthermore, it is important to note that diasporic communities also change over time. Changes can occur rapidly, from one generation to the next, and they can lead to an integration and acculturation of the immigrant community in the host land and its cultural universe to such a degree that it no longer makes sense to speak of a "diaspora." Consequently, diasporic communities, and thus their cultures, must be considered volatile and unstable, so that an analysis of diasporic cultural activity can present only a snapshot of a particular more or less fleeting moment. Finally, there is the question of what role the original homeland plays for those who left it. For some diaspora theorists, the continued relationship with the homeland is crucial to the definition of a diasporic community (see Safran 1991 and 1999). This relationship can take various forms, such as the memorialization of former life in the homeland, imagining a return home, or active interference in the culture and politics of the homeland from the position of exile. All these factors are important to consider when we speak about something we would like to call a "Tamil diaspora" and its literary practices. Here, I proceed from an exploration of the diachronic dimension of the term, i.e., with a consideration of the two primary waves of migration leading to the emergence of different Tamil diasporas at different times as reflected in literary texts.

The First Wave of Migration

Until about the middle of the nineteenth century, Tamil literature was localized in South India and, on a smaller scale, in Sri Lanka. It has existed in these locales for about two thousand years, but we have no good evidence of any significant circulation of Tamil *literary* texts outside of the Tamil-speaking parts of South India and Sri Lanka during that long period.[6] During the nineteenth century, Tamil migration in the wake of British colonial expansion led to the first *large-scale* Tamil diasporas. Tamils who sought new occupations in Singapore, Malaysia,

5 On how Sri Lankan Tamil women authors write about the specific problems Tamil women face in exile, see Thiruchandran (2006).

6 There certainly are texts, such as inscriptions, but there is no literature in the sense of belles lettres.

Burma, South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, Guyana, and Trinidad created their own communities and also established their own cultural institutions, such as libraries, printing presses, newspapers, magazines, drama clubs, and literary societies.[7] It is clear that in these newly formed diasporic communities literature served as an instrument for exploring life, since some of the earliest literary works created in these new environments thematize the issue of migration and transcultural negotiation. In Singapore, for instance, the first Tamil newspaper, *Singai Varthamani*, was founded in 1875. When this first venture folded, the same editor, C. K. Makhdoom Sahib, founded the weekly *Singai Nesan* in 1887. For this newspaper, Makhdoom Sahib wrote a series of humorous dialogues in which fictional characters discuss various aspects of Singapore Tamil culture. One of these was titled "Humorous Dialogue between a Singaporean and an Indian" ("vin̲ōta campāṣaṇai, itu ciṅkappūrān̲ukkum intiyan̲ukkum iṭaiyē naṭantatu") and published in *Singai Nesan* in two installments on September 24 and October 1, 1888. In this conversation, a Singaporean Tamil explains to a newly arrived South Indian Tamil the peculiar usage of the Tamil language in Singapore. Eager to do business in Singapore, the Indian is curious about the language of commerce. The Singaporean explains that the languages spoken in Singapore are Malay, Javanese, Chinese, Tamil, Hindustani, Arabic, and many others, and he also clarifies some of the Chinese and Malay words that have become common in Singapore Tamil. In this short piece, Singapore is depicted as a linguistic and cultural "contact zone" (Pratt 1992: 4), a melting pot where a new "Singapore Tamil" has developed that is different from South Indian or Sri Lankan Tamil. Makhdoom Sahib's prose compositions, which, together with the poems of Sadasiva Panditar,[8] belong to the earliest known specimens of Singapore Tamil belles lettres, thus present reflections of and about diasporic life through the medium of literature.

Another early reflection of Tamil diasporic life is a novel written by Puloli K. Subrahmanyam, who migrated from Jaffna to British Malaya to work for the Krian Licensing Board in Perak. Subrahmanyam's novel titled *Balasundaram or The Victory of Virtue* (*Pālacuntaram allatu Can̲mārkka jeyam*) was published in Penang in 1918. While traveling on a ship from his native Jaffna to British Malaya to seek employment, the teenager Balasundaram falls in love with

7 It has to be noted that among these only the literary cultures of Singapore and Malaysia have been relatively well documented. See Amrith (2013) and also Rai (2014) for the wider historical context of that migration.

8 Sadasiva Panditar was the author of two devotional poems on the deity of the Singapore Thandayudhapani temple, *Ciṅkai nakar antāti* and *Cittirak kavikaḷ*, published in Singapore in (1887); see Tiṇṇappan̲ (1998).

beautiful Neelatchi. Upon arrival in Malaya, they each go their separate ways, but Balasundaram cannot forget the woman of his dreams. When he accidentally meets her again, she is married to a man who has been imprisoned under allegation of murder. Neelatchi is attracted to Balasundaram, who is handsome and educated and at any rate preferable to a husband in prison. So she tries to seduce him. But while Balasundaram remains steadfast, her husband commits suicide when he learns about his wife's loose morals. Virtuous Balasundaram helps Neelatchi reform her ways and eventually returns to Sri Lanka, marries a local girl, and leads a happy life ever after. Like numerous Tamil novels written in South India during the first decades of the twentieth century, *Balasundaram or The Victory of Virtue* is a didactic book addressing various issues of social reform, such as the importance of morality and education. But the novel also touches on various aspects of diasporic life. It contains descriptions of the coffee estates and the celebration of the great Hindu temple festival of *Thaipusam*, a major event in Malaysia and Singapore to this day. Most importantly, the novel deals with the challenges and dangers of a modernizing society where people try to negotiate and refashion morality and cultural standards within a multicultural contact zone. The question of what constitutes a *ca<u>n</u>mārkkam*, a path of virtue or proper behavior, in a changing and multicultural society is the overall theme of the novel.[9]

That such explorations of how to live a new, modern life in a changing society constituted an important topic for diasporic novelists is further betokened by the fact that Subrahmanyam's novel was followed by another novel that resembled it very closely. *Sampasivam–Gnanamirtham or The Treasure of Virtue* (*Cāmpacivam–Ñā<u>n</u>āmirtam allatu Na<u>nn</u>e<u>r</u>ik kaḷañciyam*) by Arunachalam Nagalingam (1901–79), who migrated to British Malaya at the age of nineteen from his native Karainakar, Jaffna (Sri Lanka), to work as a clerk at the Treasury of Malaya, was published in Kuala Lumpur in 1927. In an attempt to escape from a life of poverty in Jaffna, twelve-year-old Sambasivam, the novel's protagonist, travels to British Malaya by himself. Despite many adversities, Sambasivam manages to become a teacher of Tamil and English and a social activist. He marries Gnanamirtham, the daughter of his mentor in Malaya, and finally returns to Jaffna to serve his native country. Like Subrahmanyam's novel *Sampasivam–Gnanamirtham* also addresses issues of social reform, such as child marriage, women's education, dowry disputes, or the deleterious effects of alcoholism. The work also

9 See also the technical discussions of the novel's theme, plot, characterization, and style in Venugopal (1999).

explores aspects of diasporic life, such as the role of family relations among exiles or the importance for the younger generations of engaging with Tamil culture and learning the Tamil language.

While novels such as *Balasundaram* and *Sampasivam–Gnanamirtham* are certainly full of romance, melodrama, and predictable twists and turns to a degree that many readers of the twenty-first century may find unpalatable, one should not dismiss them too quickly. If we look beyond their often sensationalist plots, these novels turn out to be rich documents of the particular historical situation of social change during the height of colonial modernity which entailed the formation of the first Tamil diasporas. These novels portray people and cultures in motion. They show the varied attempts of diasporic Tamils to fathom the reality of their new life through the imaginary lifeworlds and possible universes of fictional characters.

While themes centered round migration, cultural contact, and colonial modernity were important to the early Tamil writers in Singapore and Malaysia, other issues rose to prominence over time as Tamils became firmly rooted in their new social environments. As the literary cultures of Singapore and Malaysia continued to flourish and dozens of writers produced poems, short stories, novels, plays, and essays, writers became increasingly independent from the literary culture of the South Indian and Sri Lankan homelands. This autonomy of the diasporic literary field consisted in the fact that (a) authors no longer depended on South India's literary infrastructures, such as magazines, libraries, booksellers, and publishing houses, in order to reach their readers, and (b) their work dealt with issues that were largely unrelated to life in the homeland. In other words, their writing became firmly rooted in the social and cultural realities of Singapore and Malaysia, which it engaged in manifold ways. Furthermore, in any diaspora the sense of living in displacement and the wish to return to one's ancestral land may decrease over time or disappear altogether. Thus, today's Tamil writing in Singapore and Malaysia is not primarily defined by its relationship with South India or driven by the authors' desire to return to India as the Tamil homeland. It is true that out of the diasporas created during the colonial period Singapore and Malaysia became the only places where literary practices flourished to such a degree that they were noticed in South India and Sri Lanka. But it must be said that not many Tamil readers in South India regularly read Tamil writers from Southeast Asian countries. Given this relatively high degree of autonomy of the Tamil literary cultures in Singapore and Malaysia, it seems that they are no longer adequately described by the term "diasporic Tamil literature."

The Second Wave of Migration

From the 1980s onwards, Sri Lanka's civil war led to another large-scale migration of Tamils. A large number of Sri Lankan Tamils left the island, perhaps about 1 million people, and settled in many different places around the globe – places like Switzerland or Denmark which had never included a Tamil population before. Tamil now spread to all corners of the globe, with larger populations in Canada, the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, and Australia. In all these new places, Tamils started to publish books, newspapers, and magazines, so new publishing houses and media were established. Some of the literary magazines only appeared for a number of years and then folded, such as *Eksil* ("Exile," France), *A Ā I* ("ABC," Netherlands), or *Tūṇṭil* ("Fishing Hook," Germany), while others continue to be successful today, such as *Kālam* ("Time"), which has been published from Canada since July 1990. The horrors of the war drove many to write about their lives, their experiences, and their political views. Thus, many new authors were born, authors who found an interested reading public in those who shared with them their life in exile. These new authors soon organized literary meetings (*ilakkiyac cantippu*), in Germany, England, or in France, where they met fellow authors and discussed not only each other's works but also Tamil literature written by authors living in South Asia. In the late nineties, the Internet began to make things easier. Literature could be read on websites or emailed. Tamils from Norway to Switzerland and France to the Czech Republic could now be in touch not only with their friends and family in India and Sri Lanka, but also with each other. Words like "asylum" (*tañcam*), "exile" (*pukaliṭam*), and "diaspora" (*pulampeyarvu, pulampeyarntōr*) gained currency at that point to refer to what came to be perceived as a shared experience amongst people who lived thousands of miles apart.

As in the case of the pioneering diasporic Tamil writers in Singapore and Malaysia, numerous diasporic Sri Lankan Tamil authors have chosen to write about their experiences, their life in exile. The psychological negotiation is different from author to author, but it can be located somewhere between the two different ends of the spectrum we find in the reflections of Theodor W. Adorno and Edward Said. For Adorno, who was forced to leave his native Germany during the Nazi regime, life in exile was always a damaged life. He famously encapsulated his view that any attempt to deny this damage, this loss, only makes life more difficult with the sentence "There can be no right

life in the wrong one" (Adorno 2005: 39).[10] In contrast, Edward Said emphasized that out of the ruins of the self, the tears, the hate, and the fear, something new, enriching, and positive can be born. Said pointed out that "[w]hat has been left behind may either be mourned, or it can be used to provide a different set of lenses. Since almost by definition exile and memory go together, it is what one remembers of the past and how one remembers that determine how one sees the future" (Said 2000: xxxv). The future, according to Said, can hold renewal and hope, but, in any case, the present for the exile is a richer, deeper life. As Said argued: "Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal* . . . Thus, both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally" (86). The contrapuntal awareness of an author in exile can be used as a major source of inspiration. A life lived simultaneously in the interstices of two cultures entails the challenge of constant comparison, constant philosophical inquiry and epistemic adjustments – in short, a richer, deeper life.

The novels written by Ratnam Thiagalingam (b. 1967), who sought asylum in Norway, are reminiscent of Adorno's perspective of the "wrong life." His first novel, *Inviting Ruin* (*A̱ḻiviṉ a̱ḻaippitaḻ*, 1994), deals with how Tamil immigrants to Norway cope with European modes of sexuality and the threat of HIV/AIDS. In his second novel, *Tomorrow* (*Nāḷai*, 1999), he writes about the clash of Sri Lankan immigrants with Neo-Nazis in Norway and the racist violence against Tamil immigrants that erupted in the 1990s all over Europe. *Nāḷai* tells the story of Devaguru and his wife, Nithyayini, who have come as immigrants to seek asylum in Norway. When Devaguru and his family are confronted with racism and Neo-Nazi violence, he tries to remain committed to his Gandhian ideals of nonviolence. The novel begins with a first incident when Nithyayini and her coworker Jeevitha walk home late one night from their job in a fish processing factory, where they work long hours under inhuman conditions, and run into four Norwegian boys who accost them. One of the boys empties a bottle of beer over Nithyayini's head, but then they let the two women go. When Nithyayini gets home, she breaks down and cries, but her husband does not quite know how to console her or what to make of the racist violence his wife has encountered. The situation escalates

10 The original reads, "Es gibt kein richtiges Leben im falschen." I have modified the English translation.

when their daughter Malathi, a primary school child, is attacked and burned alive by a Neo-Nazi gang.

Another striking example of diasporic writing describing a life in-between multiple selves, where a traumatic past mingles with a traumatic present, is found in the work of Anthonythasan Jesuthasan (b. 1967), writing under the nom de plume Shobasakthi (Ṣōpācakti), who was in his teens a soldier of the LTTE (Tamil Tigers), but later left them for ideological reasons. He has been living in Paris since 1993, making a living by odd jobs, such as stocking shelves in supermarkets or washing dishes, but also starring as the protagonist of Jacques Audiard's movie *Dheepan* (2015), winner of the 2015 Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.[11] Shobasakthi's first novel, titled *Gorilla* (*Korillā*), was published in 2001. Examining this novel at greater length will illustrate some of the complexities of the writing by Sri Lankan Tamils in exile. *Gorilla* opens with a letter in which a Sri Lankan Tamil man named Anthony Thasan petitions the French government for political asylum in France. In the petition, Anthony tells the story of his life, the various instances of torture he and his family have suffered at the hands of the Sri Lankan army, the Indian Peacekeeping Forces, and various Tamil liberation groups. As we turn the page, we shift, without transition, to the small town of Kunjan Fields in Sri Lanka. This is the home of a man known to everyone as "Gorilla," a violent thug who steals and terrorizes his family and others. The nickname is a play on words, since the Tamil word *korillā* can refer to both "guerrilla" and "gorilla." Gorilla's eldest son, Rocky Raj, runs away from the violence at home and joins an LTTE training camp for teenage boys. At the camp, the boys are assigned new names to make them part of the common "Movement." Rocky Raj is excited at the possibility of renaming himself and wants his Movement name to be Arafat, but he does not get to choose and is assigned the name Sanjay, after Indira Gandhi's second son. Everyone in the Movement, though, comes to call him Gorilla, after his infamous father.

Rocky is intelligent and studious, an idealistic soul who subscribes wholeheartedly to the LTTE's political and ideological engagement for the creation of an independent Tamil state. But he is not a fighter. He finds the strenuous physical training difficult to endure and is disillusioned by the classes he is taught in the camp, which have little to do with political theory and instead teach the future soldiers about different types of explosives and weaponry.

11 My reading of Shobasakthi's work has benefited from the extended discussions I had with the author in June (2010) in Paris.

His training concludes with a final session on how one escapes from the army. The boys are put through a simulation in which they are tortured until they admit to being members of the LTTE. Rocky is determined to prove himself, so he endures the torture without surrendering, and therefore passes the training. But now that he is an approved soldier of the LTTE, he comes to find the tactics of the movement increasingly questionable, strategically as well as ethically. He objects to harming innocent civilians and demands fairness in the daily operations. Shunned by his fellow soldiers because of his sense of morality, Rocky finally becomes a victim of the movement's own internal corruption. He is detained, interrogated, and severely tortured. Eventually, he manages to escape and returns home, where his little sister tells him that their own father had a hand in his denunciation. A physically and morally wounded Rocky decides to leave Kunjan Fields for Sri Lanka's capital Colombo.

The novel then shifts to Paris. We learn that the asylum seeker Anthony Thasan (who wrote the letter at the beginning of the novel) is actually Rocky Raj and that the personal history presented in his petition is a fabrication. Anthony/Rocky lives in Paris with another Sri Lankan refugee, who is also the first-person narrator of this last section of the novel (while the part set in Sri Lanka is told as an authorial narrative). Their friend Lokka, a fellow Sri Lankan Tamil, is a particularly interesting character. He is a humanist and idealist, and a proponent of nonviolence. Lokka thus serves as a sharp contrast to the angry, disillusioned, violence-prone Anthony. It is hard not to read the two as allegories of two opposite emotional and intellectual dispositions prevalent among the Sri Lankan refugee community. At one point, when Anthony is about to get into a physical confrontation, Lokka steps in and asks: "Are you not refugees who have come from a country where you have seen enough murders to rot both eyes?" (Shobasakthi 2008: 157).

Before long, however, it is Lokka who is arrested by the French police for murdering his wife, who had begun a relationship with another immigrant. The same Lokka who had been preaching nonviolence to Anthony and others apparently throws all convictions overboard when his own life is concerned. As part of the murder investigation, the police connect Anthony to a lie detector. The first question they ask him is his real name. Anthony is truly confused by the question. He tries the various names he has had over the course of his life: Thaninayagam (the false name under which he garners employment in Paris), Anthony Thasan, Rocky Raj, and finally Gorilla. But the lie detector declares him a liar every single time. The interrogation is

interrupted when we hear through the policeman's walkie-talkie that another innocent Tamilian has been murdered.

So the violence continues as the novel comes to an abrupt end. In fact, there is no ending, no closure to this story, which is really several stories intertwined, fabricated, misremembered, to such an extent that even its protagonist Rocky/Anthony/"Gorilla" finds it hard to disentangle fact from fiction. The very physicality of the text alerts us to this incoherence in a thoroughly postmodern mode of montage. One narrative blends into another, and there are no chapter titles, but the paragraphs are numbered instead. At crucial narrative turning points, we turn toward an empty page with a single word *toṭarum* "to be continued" printed toward the bottom. Each new section begins with larger-font incipit letters and the paragraph numbering starts over. The text seamlessly ingests various letters, and it has footnotes providing biographical information on historical and fictional characters and other explanations. There is something desperate about this attempt at authenticity and authority through footnotes and numbered lists. As if the narrative were striving for order, sequence, and cohesion at the level of form, while the content repeatedly narrates chaos and leads to a hollow-sounding "to be continued."

The text thus mimics, or stages, what we also find at the level of diegesis. After Rocky's life had to be retold so many times, there is no real life left. Rocky is suspended somewhere in-between all these intersecting life histories. His life in the diaspora as a refugee begins with a lie, the story he tells in his petition and that he has to concoct in order to be granted asylum. His past lives, as a victim of childhood abuse in the village and later as a boy soldier in the LTTE, also become blurred fragments in his memory, fissured histories not contained, not circumscribed by a name for the person which should have been the focus point around which they crystallized. Rocky's predicament is that of many Sri Lankan Tamils who live in the diaspora. Edward Said's formulation of the exile's contrapuntal life that we encountered above takes on an uncanny quality here. Rocky's diasporic situation does not seem to provide an enhanced or sharpened vision, but instead a total eclipse of the ability to see the past. Rocky Raj's story, as told in *Gorilla*, alerts us to the fact that Said's new set of lenses, the redemptive side of exile, does not come easy. For Sri Lankan Tamil survivors of physical and psychological trauma, a diasporic contrapuntal awareness often comes with the dark underside of past terror, fragments of trauma, and the struggle against one's former life histories which keep crowding back into the present.

The novels by Shobasakthi and Thiagalingam provide only a small sample of the rich and vast writing by Sri Lankan authors living in exile. Moreover, in addition to the two primary waves of migration described above, there have been others. For instance, at least since India's independence Tamils have migrated to the United States and Australia to seek economic success. Today there are a few Tamil authors who belong to that group of economic or labor immigrants, such as the poet and short story writer Gokulakannan (b. 1970).[12] But this type of migration has not had the same powerful impact on the worldwide spread of Tamil literature as Sri Lanka's war.

From the Diasporic to the Global

Compared to the first wave of migration, the second wave has had very different cultural implications. The situation could be described, in broad terms, as follows: During the nineteenth century, South India and Sri Lanka formed the Tamil homeland or the Tamil cultural center and places like Singapore and Malaysia constituted a small number of different diasporic peripheries. Since the 1980s and for the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, Sri Lanka constitutes the cultural center. But given the global spread of diasporic communities, the periphery for that cultural center is now the world. This larger, indeed global canvas has become an essential part of what constitutes "Tamil literature" today. While I agree that the term *diasporic Tamil literature* might remain useful for certain purposes, I would like to propose an analytical emphasis on the larger perspective, moving from *tāyakam kaṭanta tamiḻ ilakkiyam* or "diasporic Tamil literature" to *ulakattamiḻ ilakkiyam* or what I would translate as "global Tamil literature."

Put succinctly, the argument could be phrased like this: Over the past thirty years, the system of Tamil literary production and consumption has undergone a major transformation that involves a number of interconnected processes, such as the establishment of diasporic hubs or centers of Tamil literary culture all over the world in the wake of global Tamil migration (especially after the outbreak of Sri Lanka's civil war in the 1980s); an increased attention to other literary cultures around the world reflected in the increasing number of translations into Tamil and extended debates in literary magazines and journals; an increased circulation and global distribution of Tamil literary writing through larger networks of publishers, booksellers, and notably the Internet. This large-scale transformation

12 Gokulakannan, who lives in California and works in the IT industry, has published two collections of poems and a book of short stories to date.

has led to a scenario in which Tamil literary culture has become both broader and deeper, while at the same time still operating through what seems to me to be best described in terms of a cultural center and periphery. It appears that as this process of globalization of Tamil literature is continuing to unfold, the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the historic homeland of Tamil culture, has so far remained the prime center of Tamil literary culture in terms of infrastructure (with the largest concentration of readers, publishing houses, literary magazines, and literary awards) as well as in terms of discursive hegemony, that is, with regard to what critics and readers say about books, what gets published, or which themes are dealt with by authors. But unlike two or three decades ago, both the infrastructure and the literary discourses of this center are today increasingly inflected and altered through the activities of authors and readers located in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia – what I would like to call a Tamil literary and cultural periphery. These inflections and alterations, the ways in which the periphery puts pressure on the center, so to speak, appear in many forms. For instance, the periphery is developing increasingly profitable markets for Tamil books and literary magazines from which South India's Tamil publishers benefit. At the same time, new publishing houses open and compete with the established institutions of South India. Furthermore, literary awards and prizes from the periphery (such as the Toronto Tamil Literary Garden award) help to bolster an author's fame and thus boost the distribution of his or her books in South India.

The emergence of global Tamil literature has hardly been studied so far.[13] For the scholar of world literature in the twenty-first century, the case of global Tamil literature provides an opportunity to study a wide range of questions – from the interconnections between literary processes and migration to the emergence of "significant geographies"[14] – outside of the usual bias of the commonly studied Western literary traditions. Global Tamil literature offers a fresh archive to develop the study of world literature further in the sense of what Ottmar Ette has recently outlined as a future philology of the literatures of the world: "The question of 'world literature' versus 'the literatures of the world' boils down to this: how to design and create a world – with the aid of literatures coming from many places, many languages, and many cultures – that is not *one* world, in the sense of a 'big family' allowing only one predominant logic, but *one world*, in the sense of its innumerably diverse logics of life, of experience, of survival, and, above all, of living together" (2016: 150). The study of global Tamil

13 The present author is currently preparing a monograph-length study on the subject.
14 On overlapping discourses in the fields of world literature and migration studies, see Friedman (2018); on significant geographies see Laachir, Marzagora, and Orsini (2018).

literature, its histories, texts, authors, readers, and institutions, will help bring to this future philology of the literatures of the world the diverse logics that Ette envisions. As a historical analysis, the study of global Tamil literature will also help us understand how Tamil writers pursued their project of the modernization of Tamil literature through the repeated negotiation of influences from world literature, mainly European and American writers, but also other Indian literatures, and Japanese and Chinese writing. This is, of course, not to say that Tamil authors completely abandoned earlier genres, styles, tropes, and modes. Rather, among other things, Tamil authors *also* kept their eyes on literature produced by the rest of the world. In this manner, Tamil literature has been extraordinarily receptive, so that sonnets and haikus have found their way into Tamil as well as existentialism, psychoanalysis, postmodernist experimentation, and climate change. In drawing on and responding to other literary works, Tamil authors have shown extraordinary creativity. Some pivotal moments in that process of intercultural conversation would include the early Bible translations and theological arguments which altered the practices of writing Tamil prose; the translations of Shakespeare's works into Tamil from the 1870s onwards; the experimentation of poets like Bharati (1882–1921) and Maraimalai Adigal (1876–1950) with writing sonnets and their fascination with British Romantic poets like Keats and Wordsworth; the popular novels of the 1900s to the 1940s and their indebtedness to *Sherlock Holmes* and other Western popular fiction; the crucial contributions of avant-garde literary magazines, such as *Maṇikkoṭi* ("The Jewel Banner") in the 1930s, *Eḻuttu* ("Writing") in the 1960s, and *Kalachuvadu* ("Footprints of Time") and *Nirappirikai* ("Color spectrum") in the 1980s and 1990s; the participation of Tamil writers like Bama (b. 1958) and Salma (b. 1968) in the international Frankfurt Book Fair (*Frankfurter Buchmesse*); the novelist Charu Nivedita's (b. 1953) fascination with Kathy Acker, Italo Calvino, Roland Barthes, and other experimental/postmodern writers and thinkers; or the publication of Perumal Murugan's (b. 1966) highly controversial novel *One Part Woman* (Mātorupākaṉ, 2010) in English translation in the United States in 2018. What Tamil authors achieved and continue to achieve in all these moments of intercultural negotiation has never been a derivative enterprise, merely trying to imitate the established forces or avant-garde movements of other literatures and places. Instead, Tamil writers have time and again drawn on other literatures as well as on Tamil's own long literary history and indigenous forms, styles, and themes in order to create genuinely new works. Thus, Tamil literature, in its global form today, offers the reader a vast and rich archive to study world literary phenomena.

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PART IV

⋆

CARTOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

22

The Multilingual Local: Worlding Literature in India

FRANCESCA ORSINI

The advantage of doing world literature from the perspective of South Asia is that its deep and persistent multilingualism makes it impossible to begin with the equation between language and nation that underwrites so many other national literary histories. Literary history in South Asia can never be simply national or simply monolingual. Nor is its visible contribution to world literature the result of a neat process of literary upscaling and distillation, from local to regional, from regional to national, and from national to world (Orsini 2007 "India"). If literature and literary history from a South Asian perspective force us to work with multiple languages and multiple levels and circuits of circulation, the same ought to be true when it comes to world literature. To view India/South Asia as arriving on the world literary stage only with Tagore or with novel writing in English is to ignore its vast literary production over three millennia.

Historicizing multilingualism is crucial, since shifts in language ideologies, in the balance between cosmopolitan and vernacular languages, and in literary tastes and aesthetics also shifted orientations to the world. This made certain geographies and literatures up-close and "significant" (Laachir, Marzagora, and Orsini 2018), while others became distant or invisible. Finally, it is worth paying attention to the multiple media through which literature has circulated into and out of Indian languages, English included, and across regions and countries. These have included magazines, theater, and singing. Attending to the dynamics of circulation and the role of different media and genres in literary "worldmaking" (Goodman 1978) helps us focus issues of visibility and familiarity, register "thick" and "thin" readerly encounters, and consider the local production of world literature.

Multilingualism

Multilingualism in this chapter is an umbrella term for a range of phenomena that we need to disentangle. First, given the mobility of both performers and audiences, including itinerant performing castes and elite performers, labor and military groups, and religious specialists and pilgrims, there is the multilingualism of orature (which includes the oral performance, recitation, or expounding of written texts). For example, in public and semi-public spaces within the same locality, individuals could be exposed to devotional song-poems, ritual expositions of Sanskrit narratives, Urdu (and to a lesser extent Persian) couplets, Shiʿa elegies in Persian, Urdu, and the local language, but also to regional and caste epics, seasonal songs and song competitions, folk theater performances, etc. In other words, orature only partly reflected local speech and already carried echoes of several languages and of worlds "elsewhere."

Then there is the multilingualism of the written world. As in Europe or East Asia, in South Asia education involved acquiring linguistic and literary proficiency *not* in one's first language (or "mother tongue," a modern concept) but in one or more high/formal languages depending on one's family's background, profession, aspirations, and personal taste – whether Persian, Sanskrit, or in some cases Arabic. Cultivated individuals also underwent training in literary vernaculars that had acquired a cosmopolitan status, or were needed for particular pursuits like music. This was the case of Brajbhasha, originally the spoken language ("bhasha") of the Braj region (Busch 2011) which became a literary *koine* used for courtly and devotional poetry.

Since writing was linked to professional and social profiles, the same language could be written in more than one script, and the same was true, owing to regional variation, of Sanskrit. The tight nexus between language, script, and community (e.g., Nagari-Hindi-Hindu vs. Nastaliq-Urdu-Muslim) was one of the "gifts" of colonialism, and it has been of great consequence for literature, literary history, the creation of literary canons, and the idea of Indian literature. Communitarian and Völkish histories of language and literature have divided them as "belonging" to specific religious or regional communities, and only certain diglossic relations have been valued and acknowledged (between Hindi/Bengali/Marathi and Sanskrit, or Urdu and Persian or Arabic, etc.), while others have been denied or devalued (Hindi and Persian, Tamil and Sanskrit, etc.). Multilingual literary history in India is therefore a project of dis-assembling and reassembling categories and texts in order to make lost connections visible again (Orsini 2012).

The emphasis on orature and the performance of songs, tales, epics, sermons, i.e., of so much of what counted as literature, is important. Thinking of texts in performance helps us to imagine them reaching beyond the scripts they were written in, and to register but also challenge the partial view offered by the monolingual archives they have been inscribed in. It also helps us look for traces of the actual circulation of literary texts and tastes – embodied in performers as well as manuscripts or printed books – away from lazy assumptions about far-reaching cosmopolitan and limited-reach vernacular texts (Orsini and Schofield 2015).

A multilingual perspective also helps us historicize the modern hierarchy between English and Indian languages – so relevant to world literature. Thinking of English coming into an already multilingual, layered, and dynamic literary field shifts our view of colonial/imperial English as fundamentally reshaping Indian languages and literature in its own image and turning India into a literary (semi-) periphery of Europe. It redirects our gaze to continuities as well as innovations, and to the transformation and repurposing of existing literary tropes of love, nature, beauty, and the seasons (Rajamani, Schofield, and Pernau 2018). It shows the resilience of aesthetics and tastes even after literary and social reformers had pronounced them irrelevant or, worse, decadent and dangerous – as the case of the Perso-Urdu ghazal exemplifies so well.

Even after new ideas of language and community crystallized and divided vernaculars into mutually exclusive entities (e.g., Malayalam vs Tamil), and literary traditions were accordingly compartmentalized (e.g., Tamil vs Telugu), neither oral nor written multilingualism disappeared. The familiarity with the aesthetics and affective resonances of genres that were officially "othered" is reflected in the continued familiarity of audiences and writers with the eclectic repertoire of professional singers and, later, playwrights and film lyricists.

Earlier Cosmopolitanisms

From the perspective of the cosmopolitan literary languages of Sanskrit and Persian, India was arguably part of world literature from the start (Pollock 2006; Spooner and Hanaway 2012). We need only think of the spread of the Sanskrit *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* into Southeast Asia, or the more mediated circulation of the *Panchatantra* or the *Jataka* stories westward and eastward across a bewildering range of languages and versions (Scarcia 1998; Almond 1987).

Indian literati writing in Persian – from Mas'ud Sa'd Salman (1046–1121, Sharma *Persian poetry*) to Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), both incidentally from Lahore – were part of a vast Persian cosmopolis that for seven centuries ranged from Transoxiana/Central Asia to Western China. Arabic had an even wider geographical reach but more limited literary penetration in India (Leese 2019). Thanks to the steady circulation of manuscript books along trade routes, and to poetic dictionaries-cum-anthologies that collected and transmitted the memory of poets and selections of their verse, if not their full works, this Persian literary cosmopolis was remarkably well connected, while its centers shifted according largely to political circumstances of patronage. Delhi was one such centre in the thirteenth century, and the poet Amir Khusraw (1253–1325) probably remains the most famous Indian Persian poet, whose Quintet (*khamsa*) of romances matched that of Nizami of Ganja (Sharma 2005). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, India once again became a center of Persian literary culture, and many Iranian poets migrated to find employment and fortune there with the Mughals in the North or the Sultanates in the Deccan (Sharma 2017; Subrahmanyan 1992).

This was a remarkably stable literary culture, whose play with geographical markers like blackness for India (black skin turned into a mark of beauty), the mildness of Fars, or Chinese beauties reflected a cosmopolitan sensibility. As is often the case with early cosmopolitan literary cultures, its boundaries set the boundaries of the literary world that mattered, and internal regional specificities were underplayed. This did not exclude moments of intense translation from other languages, typically sponsored by rulers,[1] but by and large non-Persian literary genres and texts were either transliterated into Persian codes or read in the original languages. Translation was more frequent for "texts of knowledge," whether philosophy, science, or music theory. This presents quite a different model from the one of world literature and circulation we are used to, which relies so heavily on formal textual translation. And while vernacular literatures drew substantially upon cosmopolitan models (Pollock 2000; d'Hubert 2018), it seems more appropriate to speak of a parallel cultivation, circulation, and expansion of literature in cosmopolitan and vernacular languages in the early modern period rather than a linear process of vernacularization (Orsini "How to").

1 E.g., Sultan Zain al-Abidin in fifteenth-century Kashmir, or the Mughal emperor Akbar a century later.

Enters English

Did English just slot into the cosmopolitan "high" status earlier accorded to Persian, with educated Indians studying Augustan and Romantic poets instead of the Persian classics? Yes and no. The earlier cosmopolitan-and-vernacular multilingual literary paradigm was reconstituted with English and the vernaculars but also replaced in the early twentieth century by one in which, as already mentioned, Indian languages were imagined as discrete entities, grouped into families, and placed next to each other on a subcontinental map (Majeed 2018). This new linguistic consciousness that came with colonial education invoked the naturalness of the "mother tongue," and it distanced itself from the multilingual and courtly literary past. It looked instead for "peoples' poets" (though only of the "refined" kind), produced regional versions of roughly the same literary-historical narrative, and urged writers and readers to loyally "serve" their mother tongue.

At the same time, European orientalism – which, as Aamir Mufti has pointed out, rendered Goethe's formulation of *Weltliteratur* possible in the first place – and particularly the "discovery" of Sanskrit, and the subsequent enthusiasm for "classical India," led to a devaluation of the Indo-Persian heritage. The classic narrative here is Schwab's. In fact, once Islamic "foreign" conquest and devastation became the primary historical trope – one that has continued to echo even in titles like V. S. Naipaul's *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) – the literature of the whole second millennium was read through the prism of either decadence or Hindu resistance, with vernacular devotional poets like Kabir or Tulsidas singled out as benevolent forces of social cohesion (Pinch 2003). The paradigm of classical splendor versus medieval decline and of the baleful impact of foreign aggressors – a flexible and effective paradigm that could be endlessly reworked – recoded entire swathes of literary tradition and made texts "foreign" and "homeless" (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001).

The impact of English colonial ideas was felt most strongly at the level of language ideology, critical discourse, and historical consciousness. Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824–73), one of the early students of English literature at Hindu College in Calcutta in the 1830s, enthused:

> I acknowledge to you, and I need not blush to do so – that I love the language of the Anglo-Saxon. Yes – I *love* the language – the glorious language of the Anglo-Saxon! My imagination visions forth before me the language of the Anglo-Saxon in all its radiant beauty; and I feel silenced and abashed. [. . .] It is

> the glorious mission, I repeat, of the Anglo-Saxon to renovate, to regenerate, or – in one word, to Christianize the Hindu. (Seely 2004: 9).

It is another matter that Madhusudan Dutt famously switched to Bangla in 1850s and wrote plays and Miltonian epic poetry in that language.

Praising a pedestrian and abstruse, but ever so faithful, Hindi translation by Shridhar Pathak of Oliver Goldsmith's *The Hermit* (*Ekāntvāsī yogi*, 1886), one colonial officer wrote:

> Works such as these will not only make a valuable addition to Hindi Literature but will tell people ignorant of English what stuff English poetry is made of. They will give them insight into that fine imagery, those delicate paintings of scenes and characters which are the peculiar attractions of English poetry, they will lead them from the land of the wild, the fantastic, the supernatural, the impossible with which so much of Oriental poetry and romance abounds into the regions of reason and reality, and lastly they will give them an opportunity of setting a right value upon foreign productions instead of blindly and therefore partially deciding in favour of works of indigenous art.
>
> (Review in *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, July 6, 1886, in Pathak 1889: iv–v)

In critical discourse, English literature became the standard through which old and new authors were praised or dismissed. Thus, Bankimchandra Chatterjee was called "the Walter Scott of India," and Agha "Hashr" Kashmiri "the Indian Shakespeare."

But other factors prevented India from becoming a literary periphery subjected to England's imperial center. Among these we may count the limited reach of English education, the resilience of earlier tastes, the dynamic energies of the print and entertainment industries, and a new political awareness. Unlike other parts of the world that were colonized, in India precolonial traditions, both written and oral, were strong and dynamic. They did come under attack by both colonial and Indian intellectuals but resurfaced in new genres like theater, and found new avenues of dissemination and new publics, in large part due to commercial publishing. The publishing industry boomed in the second half of the nineteenth century due to the cheap and flexible technology of lithography, which could easily accommodate multiple languages and scripts.

Indian literary modernity is usually read under the sign of the "coming of" the novel, the textbook, and the newspaper – which fit within a paradigm of centrifugal diffusion and imitation, But as soon as we add to them the genres that enjoyed wide circulation across both elite

and popular audiences, such as the song, musical drama and theater chapbook, the pamphlet, the satirical sketch, and the moral or entertaining tale, a different model emerges, one that stresses the local repurposing and re-constellation of old and new forms and materials, and that reveals a more segmented diffusion. Rather than a single world-literary map, we see different "significant geographies," i.e., geographies that were "significant" to particular languages and socio-texual communities depending on historical experience and political orientation (Laachir et al. 2018). For example, songs and tales circulated across the Indian Ocean to coolie colonies, while musical "Parsi" theater in Hindustani traveled successfully to the Malay straits and stimulated the creation of local commercial musical theater (Hansen 1998; Cohen 2001). Within the recent, broadened definition of literary modernism in terms of self-consciously innovative texts that speak to the condition of modernity also within commercial media, several of these genres and texts need to be reconsidered.

One final point. In Aamir Mufti's words, Orientalists in Calcutta at the turn of the nineteenth century assimilated "*as literature* a vast and heterogeneous range of practices of writing from across the world and across millennia" (2016: 11). But while European orientalists translated Sanskrit literary works into European languages (including Latin) and made them part of the nascent canon of world literature and world classics (Italia), their enthusiasm for Sanskrit and for classical India made them blind not just to Indo-Persian and the related ("Persianate") literary traditions, as already noted, but also to the new literature in modern Indian languages. Although the language requirement in the Indian administration produced an unprecedented number of people in Europe who *could* read texts in modern Indian languages, and a staggering number of contemporary works were available for purchase in Europe thanks to enterprising book importers like Nicholas Trübner, Nazir Ahmad's (1831–1912) Urdu novels or Bankimchandra Chatterjee's (1838–94) Bangla novels failed to register *as literature* even when they were translated into European languages. Bankim's *Kapal Kundala* (1866) was translated into English in 1885 and German in 1886. As a result, *modern* Indian literature failed to be assimilated into world literature. Indian literature could only be *ancient*. Even Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) – who for decades remained the only Indian writer known on the world stage thanks to the Nobel Prize in 1913 and his extensive travels – was hardly perceived as coeval, with his flowing robes and sage-like countenance.

The World beyond English

The emphasis on empire and on the impact of English have tended to obscure other literatures and "significant geographies" that were influential in how Indian writers related to the world. One of them was Turkey. Threats to the Ottoman Caliphate not only prompted concern in Urdu newspapers but also had Urdu novelists send their heroes to go and fight alongside the Ottomans. Paeans to Turkey appeared as part of the protest campaign against the post-World War I dissolution of the Caliphate (Minault 1974), while travelogues brought the experiences of Indian men *and* women in Turkey to Urdu readers (Lambert-Hurley 1998). Urdu magazines published many translations of Turkish fiction (e.g., *Hajira* by Adalat Khanum, trans. Muhammad Hasan Khan, 1911), and the Urdu writer and editor Sajjad Haider even adopted the Turkish penname "Yildirim" ("Lightning") and translated or transcreated several Turkish novels, novellas, and plays, thinking that Turkey provided Indian Muslims with a blueprint of a modernizing "Eastern" country (Husain 1992).[2]

At the same time, the discovery of Russian and French literature reduced the sense of the importance of English, and specifically British, literature as a model to emulate. English remained the *medium* through which foreign works were translated, but that itself reinforced the sense that English was a window into the world, but not the world itself. Malayalam editor and critic K. Balakrishna Pillai (1889–1960), who translated Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Mérimée's *Carmen*, stories by Maupassant, Chekhov, Daudet, and wrote on Proust, Gogol, Tokutomi, Freud, Futurism and Vorticism, Mayakovsky, and Cubism, thought that "Malayalam literature had unfortunately chosen to look towards English literature unlike Japan, where French and Russian literatures were the benchmarks" (Menon 2010: 147).

Moreover, as the idea gained strength that the mission of literature was not only to mirror but also to reform and improve society, translations were undertaken with ethical-political aims. It is for these reasons that Premchand (1880–1936), the foremost Hindi-Urdu fiction writer of the 1920s and 1930s, translated G. E. Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* and a volume of Tolstoy's stories as well as John Galsworthy's political plays *The Silver Box*, *Strife*, and *Justice* and George Eliot's *Silas Marner* (Rai 1991; Lunn 2012).

In a period when both higher education and published books were still expensive and the preserve of a few, journals were the main conduit of new

2 I am grateful to Sumaira Nawaz for these references.

literature, including foreign literature.[3] Whereas some recent debates around world literature have revolved around the curriculum and teaching anthology or publishers' series (Shankar 2012; Mani 2016), in the case of India exposure to and discussion of literature from other parts of the world largely took place in the pages of periodicals. And it is indeed difficult to overestimate the importance of magazines for the circulation of all literature, including world literature. Magazines reproduced and gave echo to important but fleeting interventions, like Tagore's famous speech on *viśvasāhitya*, or world literature, at the Indian National Council of Education in February 1907, which was published the same year in his journal, *Baṅgadarśan*. Journal articles were often the first stage before book publication, as in the case of the first book on world literature in Hindi, P. P. Bakhshi's *Viśvasāhitya* (1924), whose chapters were first published in the influential monthly he edited, *Sarasvatī*. In this book Bakhshi tries worlding literature – but basically the literatures of Europe, India, China, and Japan – by stitching together very uneven material into some coherent narrative of world civilizations and literary values.

With its "cut and paste" relay logic (Hofmeyr 2013), reliance on short forms (the review, the short note, the poem, the short story), and fragmentary, occasional, token translations, the periodical as a medium produced a particular experience of world literature: a wordliness usually without any systematic ambition. Indeed, world literature in early twentieth-century Indian periodicals was more about discovering and finding one's place in the world than about creating fronts and alignments, as would be the case in the 1950s. In the influential monthly *Modern Review* (1909–) edited by Ramanand Chatterjee from Calcutta, for example, most of the news and articles about foreign literature were reprinted or extracted from foreign periodicals (*The Bookman*, *American Literary Digest*, for example), or from other Indian magazines, and circulated further in Bangla, Hindi, Marathi, and other Indian-language periodicals. The *Modern Review* was not a literary journal per se, and the "world" was more likely to appear in the guise of articles on the "Revolution in Persia," "Political tendencies in Chinese culture," "Education in Japan or Sweden," "Egypt's plea for independence," or "Korea's rebellion against Japanese rule."[4] In fact, from the pages of the *Modern Review*, the world appeared largely as non-Europe rising against imperialism. "Not unnaturally the eyes of all Indians are today turned

3 This section draws on my "World Literature, Indian Views" (Orsini 2019).

4 Six articles on Japan in 1920 alone, including one on "Japanese opinion on the Turkish question" reprinted from the *Asian Review* (*Modern Review*, May 1920, 580).

towards countries like Turkey, China and Persia," wrote N. H. Setalvad from London in 1911, "where the peoples left free from the dominating influence of European nations in search of countries to exploit, have been developing a marked desire to evolve for themselves one kind of representative government or another" (1911: 132). The political focus on Asia was unmistakeable, and among the foreign periodicals quoted in the *Modern Review* were the *Asian Review*, *The Japan Magazine*, and *Philippine Review*. By comparison, world literature appeared largely as "cut-and-paste" snippets, notes, and summaries – almost never as translations. Short notices announced the winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature, and the names of foreign authors were mentioned with a few words of critical introduction – Turgenev is the "Russian of the Boulevards," Dostoevsky "is important in the history of Russian liberty less for what he wrote than what he suffered."[5] Though far less systematic than the coverage of international politics, these snippets nevertheless created some familiarity with literatures beyond English and made visible new parts of the literary world. Regular reports of Rabindranath Tagore's travels, speeches, and accolades, relayed by periodicals into other Indian languages, contributed to making him the first Indian living world poet or *viśvakavi*. An outward-looking perspective on world literature ran parallel with that toward Indian-language literatures, and the *Modern Review*, like other Indian magazines of the time, covered literary news from other Indian languages with great interest.

The *Modern Review*'s thin familiarity with world literature contrasts with the dazzling range of translations undertaken by the Urdu poet and critic Miraji (1912–49). These appeared in Urdu magazines in the 1930s and 1940s – striking even after one realizes that at least some of his dense critical essays were also verbatim translations! Miraji's poetry translations ranged from the medieval German Minnesänger to Walt Whitman, Pushkin to François Villon, Charles Baudelaire to Li Po, and from Catullus to Korean, Chinese, Laotian, and Japanese poets. With the substantial introductions and critical commentary that accompanied them, these translations were part of Miraji's comprehensive – though unsystematic – pedagogical effort to expand the vision and taste of Urdu readers "whose scope, he felt, was curbed by the narrow canon they embraced and understood as convention" (Patel 2002: 50). These translations stretched Urdu's established poetic idiom, particularly in the direction of his favored "song-poems" (*gīt*), a term Miraji uses extensively. About songs from Lao, he wrote that they "do not stick to any prosody

5 "Some Russian Novelists," *Modern Review*, April 1918: 422, cited in Orsini 2019: 63.

(*radīf-kāfiya* or *baḥr*). If any *ravānī* [quality of flow] is produced, it is outside any rules. The beauty of these songs is in their imagination [*takhayyul,* which in Urdu also means imagery], which is always graceful [*ḥasīn*] and usually unexpected [*ghair-mutawaqqo'*]" (Miraji 1990: 163). Apart from Miraji's extraordinary curiosity, what is also remarkable is the complex route through which these poems reached him; often through English translations of French translations that came all the way from Istanbul to Paris, from Paris to London, and from London to Lahore and Delhi![6]

In an essay that probably started out as a radio program entitled "Songs from Many Countries," Miraji playfully used radio technology to convey a sense of free mobility and a dizzying whirlwind of poetic possibilities across times as well as places: "Turn the knob a little . . . We are speaking from France, now listen to the poem '*Rog*/Malady' by the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé . . . François Villon . . . Now we are speaking from Japan. What's the point of the dreadful and frightening news. Come, listen to a song poem from the lips of a Japanese geisha" ("Des des ke git," *Adabī duniyā* July 1938, reprinted in Miraji 1990: 177–217). Miraji's cosmopolitanism was not a game of catching-up with the latest developments in Europe by a "semi-peripheral," but rather a search for inspiring poets who belonged as much to the past as to the present, to the East as to the West. This direct poetic engagement through translation resembles T. S. Eliot's or Ezra Pound's or Tagore's. Both historical and transcending history in literary coevalness, Miraji's undertaking also prefigured the eclectic reading of later Indian modernists like Arun Kolatkar and Arvind Krishna Mehrotra (Zecchini and Nerlekar 2017).

Divided World(s)

The 1950s, the first decade after Indian independence in 1947, and also the deeply polarized decade of Bandung and the early Cold War, saw a renewed impulse toward literary internationalism, in India as elsewhere. Magazines were once again the main platforms, and transmited literary news, trends, and works into and out of foreign languages. This literary activism ran parallel with the transmission of writings and literary debates into and out of Indian languages. In both cases, a definite emphasis on contemporary

6 Miraji's East and Southeast Asian poems and essays were taken from E. Powys Mathers's twelve-volume collection *Eastern Love* (1927–28), which translated a range of French sources, including Adolphe Talasso's wide-ranging *Amour Asiatique*, first published in Istanbul in Thalasso's own *Revue orientale* in the 1880s and republished in Paris, in *Le Mercure de France* in the 1890s and then as a 400-page anthology in 1922.

literature edged toward what Elizabeth Holt has called the "global simultaneity of literary experience" (2013: 89).

But in the case of foreign literature, the world was not a single one. There was the world according to magazines affiliated with the Progressive Writers' Association, which regularly published authors from Russia, China, and Eastern Europe, such as Maxim Gorky, Konstantin Paustovsky, Lu Xun, and Julius Fucik, and publicized Soviet and Chinese publications and translations into Indian languages (Djagalov 2019; Jia 2019). There was also the "world" according to magazines that did not subscribe to or bristled at progressive literary ideology, whose foreign authors were more likely to be European or American or non-Communist writers from the Eastern Bloc like Czesław Miłosz or Boris Pasternak. The best-known case is the English-language monthly *Quest* sponsored by the International Council for Cultural Freedom (Pullin 2017).[7] Other less politically aligned magazines often had a mixture of both. Personal preference counted. When the Progressive Urdu writer, screenwriter, and film-maker K. A. Abbas was asked by a fellow Progressive about his favorite foreign authors, he singled out Dos Passos, Steinbeck, Hemingway, and Upton Sinclair among the Americans, and Chekhov and Gorky among the Russians. When asked whether he read any *contemporary* Soviet authors, he responded that since Soviet society had now rid itself of all ills, its literature lacked the tension necessary to create great literature (Abbas 2017: 25)!

Several other literary regions also became visible from the 1950s to the 1970s. These include contemporary China, Latin America, and Africa. These developments can be attributed to the decolonizing momentum of these decades, and the impact of the Afro-Asian writers' conferences and magazines like *Lotus*. This journal, based in Cairo and subsequently in Beirut, published works in parallel Arabic, French, and English translation. Several pathbreaking anthologies brought together African, Asian, and Latin American texts during this exciting period of Afro-Asian literary exchanges (Halim 2012).[8] Recent scholarship has shown the impressive amount of direct contact and familiarity between some writers due to these conferences and alliances. How much this personal familiarity translated into "readerly contact" (Thornber 2009)

7 The Hindi literary monthly *Kalpana* translated a series on the last twenty-five years of literature in several languages (including Spanish and Latin American Spanish, Brazilian, Israeli, German, Austrian, Greek, and Chinese) from *Books Abroad*, with what appears as an overflow of names and information.

8 The Hindi short-story magazine *Kahani* published a story by Jomo Kenyatta, "Hāthī aur ādmī" (Elephant and Man) in May 1955.

through actual reading and translation is another matter, but the importance of visibility, and even thin familiarity, cannot not be underestimated.

The paperback revolution and appearance of random but plentiful titles on the footpaths of Indian cities have also been cited as prompting a wide-ranging and voracious reading of world literature. As poet Dilip Chitre wrote in the introduction to his *Anthology of Marathi Poetry: 1945–1965* (1967), this paperback revolution

> unleashed a tremendous variety of . . . influences [that] ranged from classical Greek and Chinese to contemporary French, German, Spanish, Russian and Italian. The intellectual proletariat that was the product of the rise of literacy was exposed to these diverse influences. A pan-literary context was created. (cited in Mehrotra 2010: 15)[9]

Another striking feature of the 1950s is the place of English in the writers' repertoire of chosen literary languages. Unlike the present, literary writing in English by Indians was not a widespread phenomenon even as works in English (and in English translations) were a part of the Indian literary experience. While the question of a national language was not resolved with independence, and English remained an official language, the space for English writing in India was small and rather embattled. Even English-language magazines like *Quest* acknowledged that the bulk of literary writing and energy was in the Indian languages, and the tone toward Indian English fiction and poetry verged between defensive and critical.[10] At the same time, the strongly bilingual sensibility of poets like A. K. Ramanujan (1929–93, English and Tamil), Arun Kolatkar (1932–2004), and Dilip Chitre (1938–2009, both English and Marathi) was of this time, when the distance between English and *bhasha* literary sensibility was not great. "Modernity constituted my entire mental world," writes prominent Hindi short story writer Gyanjranjan (b. 1936) about his student days at the University of Allahabad in North India in the 1950s:

> I read not only the leading [Hindi] writers of the Chhayavad and Progressive schools, but also went through the entire gamut of Western writers. My days and nights were spent churning over in my mind a heady cocktail of

9 See also the impromptu long list of writers whom Arun Kolatkar mentioned as influences, from Whitman to Wang Wei, from Marathi classics and contemporaries Janabai and Nemade to Dürrenmatt and Kurosawa; Mehrotra 2010: 14–15.

10 "Although it might be objected that English used in India has developed an idiom of its own, this turns out in reality to be a time-lag responsible for failure to assimilate a developing language. The resultant local idiom in the educated use of English is a residue of cliché, an example of which comes from K. Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*"; from Foy Nissen's (positive) review of Attia Hossain's *Phoenix Fled* (1956: 61).

> Baudelaire's poems, Modigliani's biography, the suicides in Osamu Dazai's *The Setting Sun* [Eng. trans. 1956] and the bleakness of Dostoevsky. The mixture like a drug, went to my head, and I stopped thinking about [what] I had read in the past or would read in the future. (Gyanranjan 2007: 309)

Gyanranjan's slip in including Dazai among Western literature is telling. On the one hand, it suggests that the mental category of foreign and Western literature overlapped, but on the other hand, also that Western/foreign no longer include Western literature alone.[11]

In his essay "The Testimony of My Grandfather's Bookcase" (1998), Amitav Ghosh muses about the impressive and eclectic collection of books in his family's home in Calcutta, reverently maintained, though rarely read, by the rest of the family. These were mostly foreign but also Bengali novels, and the foreign authors he mentions – Marie Corelli and John Steinbeck, Grazia Deledda and Knut Hamsun, Stendhal and Turgenev, Maxim Gorky and Upton Sinclair – resonate with the different conceptions and moments of world literature in India that we have encountered in this chapter.

Later in the essay, Ghosh mentions meeting the Burmese writer Mya Than Tint and marveling at his recognition of Ghosh's own name through a battered old copy of *Granta* magazine. Yet, as we have seen, the unsystematic and often "thin" circulation of world literature through magazines, footpath paperbacks, and fragile personal networks has been as important and effective as large influential book series in producing visibility and some kind of recognition and familiarity. Absent from Ghosh's list is any mention of non-Bengali Indian authors, although, as we have seen, even in Bengali magazines curiosity toward world literature was usually accompanied by a similar curiosity toward literatures in other Indian languages.

The balance between Indian languages and English has changed substantially since the 1980s with the spectacular critical and commercial international success of Indian (and more recently Pakistani) writing in English. These writers include Salman Rushdie (whose *Midnight's Children* appeared in 1981) and a whole roster of excellent and diverse writers, from Amitav Ghosh to Rohinton Mistry, from Vikram Seth to Amit Chaudhuri and Arundhati Roy, to name just the best known. The emergence of such a strong body of writing in a language that requires no translation and, in fact, already seems to perform its own acts of self-translation ("born translated" to use Rebecca

11 One may also mention poet and later magazine editor Dharmvir Bharati's impressive translation of 125 modern poets from North and Latin America, Europe, and Russia, *Deśāntar* (*Transnational*, 1960), which included translations of Borges, Pasternak, Akhmatova, Evtushenko, etc.

Walkowitz's term), has dwarfed, and to a large extent made invisible writing in Indian languages.[12] To all intents and purposes, from Italy to China "Indian literature" now means Indian literature *in English*. This is despite the steady growth of translations of Indian-language literature into English that are published within India, a paradox that calls into question the assumption that translation is the passport to international circulation. Why don't translations of other Indian literatures circulate around the world? Here Shu-Mei Shih's argument, that literary scholarship wittingly or unwittingly colludes with the transnational book market in recognizing only anglophone writing, thus marginalizing literatures in other languages, is pertinent. For this reason, it is important to avoid equating English with world and to historicise its traffic through other literary traditions. It is also important that we continue to explore plural forms of local worldmaking and the different circuits along which literature circulates.[13] There are other "significant geographies" of literary circulation beyond that of "global" publishing, and our world is richer for attending to them.

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12 Statements by gatekeepers like Salman Rushdie that "the prose writing . . . by Indian writers working in English is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced . . . in the so-called 'vernacular languages'" have not helped (1997: x).

13 See, e.g., Hutt 2016 for the circulation of Chinese Maoist autobiographies among Nepalese Maoist readers.

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23

Oceanic Comparativism and World Literature

DEBJANI GANGULY

If world literature is conceived as a network of transregional, multi-local, and transnational nodes stretching back to antiquity, oceanic worlds can be seen to offer a generative frame for literary history. The world's oceans gird the shores of cities, nations, islands, and continents. They generate contact zones that are multilingual, demographically mixed, economically varied, and culturally hybrid. Further, much like world literature, the historicity of the oceans can scarcely be contained within the temporality of transatlantic capitalism from the eighteenth century to the present. The oceans are the world's oldest trading routes. Archeological remains across the Pacific attest to the movement of peoples, goods, and cultural practices as early as 50,000 years ago. The Mediterranean Sea has been a zone of intense contact across centuries between civilizational forces that encompass present-day North Africa, West Asia, and Southern Europe. Not only have archaeologists unearthed evidence stretching back to thousands of years before the Christian era, medieval historians typically considered the Mediterranean to be at the heart of European civilization and the sea that divided Christian Europe from the Islamic half of the region.

In the modern era, Fernand Braudel's monumental treatise *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* ([1949] 1992), combining the natural and human history of the region from ancient times to the sixteenth century, became a model for subsequent *longue durée* studies of oceanic worlds, even as scholars resisted the environmental determinism of the Annales School approach (Horden and Purcell 2000). As for the Indian Ocean, it was a "world-system" much before the advent of world-system as a category. Variously referred to as an "interregion" or a "network," this oceanic world has linked the cultures of the Chinese, Indians, Arabs, Africans, and Malays for over three millennia. Ports ranging from Durban, Dar-Es-Salam, Zanzibar, Mombasa, Jeddah, Aden, Mauritius, Bombay, Mangalore, Madras, Colombo,

Calcutta, Penang, Malacca, and Canton constituted the nodes of this network. The Indian Ocean constitutes the single largest cultural continuum in pre-European global history and, unlike the Mediterranean, the Pacific, and the Atlantic, is the only oceanic region not subject to European cartographic nomenclature. Its name is a translation from the term *al-bahr al-hindi*, found in Arabic navigational treatises.

The scholarship on oceanic worlds is vast. One thinks of the works of Braudel, but also of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell on the Mediterranean; of K. N. Chaudhury, Sugata Bose, Sunil Amrith, Isabel Hofmeyr, and Enseng Ho on the Indian Ocean; Bernard Bailyn's and David Armitage's influential works on the Atlantic; Paul Gilroy's celebrated treatise on the Black Atlantic; and Greg Dening's, Epeli Hau'ofa's, and Albert Wendt's writings on the Pacific or Oceania.[1] In literary historiography, oceans have featured as a backdrop rather than an organizing frame through much of the modern era and well into the late twentieth century. This notwithstanding the making of the modern world by the maritime imperialism of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and the English, and the proliferation of political tracts, travel writing, journals, poetry, and novels on seafaring from the seventeenth century. Renaissance scholars will remember Walter Raleigh's exhortation: "Whosoever commands the sea, commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world, commands the riches of the world and consequently the world itself" (cited in Pinkus 1995: 333). Raleigh was giving voice to popular anti-Dutch sentiments in Britain and rallying the British Crown to become the world's greatest maritime power. The Dutch, in turn, expressed concerns about the Portuguese conquest of the seas in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Hugo Grotius's famous 1609 tract on the "freedom of the seas" was written in response to the anxiety of the Dutch East India Company about the Portuguese expansion into Asian waters. Grotius's tract draws on Roman law to articulate the concept of *res nullius* or natural property, that which belonged to no one, and hence, that which could be converted into private property. Grotius's tract refers to histories of early modern conquest of American indigenous polities by Iberian forces, and cites Francisco de Vitoria's "claim that war against the Aztecs and other Amerindians was justified if the indigenous [rulers] could be accused of denying Europeans their right to the commons, the definition of which, notably, included the

1 Wendt 1980; Chaudhuri 1985; Gilroy 1993; Hau'ofa 1994; Armitage 2002; Dening 2004; Bailyn 2005; Bose 2006; Ho 2006; Hofmeyr 2010; Amrith 2013.

waves" (Price 2017: 46). The maritime imaginary of the early modern imperial world is resonant across Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English literatures. Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and *Doctor Faustus*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* are celebrated examples in English, as is Luis De Camoes's *Os Luciadas* in Portuguese.

Where modern literary history is concerned, oceans scarcely had a presence until very recently. Margaret Cohen refers to this as "hydrophasia" or the forgetting of the seas (Cohen 2010: 658). Comparative literature, with its origins in nineteenth-century theories of terrestrial, racial, and linguistic filiation through the nation-state, organized itself around competing national literatures determined primarily through land-based territorial borders. The Westphalian international order was one of competing nation-states and comparative literature aligned itself with the Westphalian imaginary (Saussy 2006). Even when the idea of world literature was canvassed as a civilizational ideal by icons such as Goethe, Schlegel, and Tagore, it was thought of primarily in terrestrial terms. But with the contemporary reemergence of world literature as a rubric characterized by literary networks, flows, and exchanges across transregional spaces and histories, the idea of the "oceanic" has gained significant traction. Scholarship on hydro-colonialisms, hydrarchies of maritime empires, premodern oceanic histories, as also a new thalassology encompassing relations between various land and water bodies from seas, bays, estuaries, lakes, islands, coastal zones, and archipelagos, has acquired substantial visibility in the past twenty years (Vink 2007; Miller 2013; and Bystrom and Hofmeyr 2017).

This chapter traces this resurgence and discusses the implications of conceiving the ocean as both a conceptual frame for and a material force in world literary history. This is a challenge of a different order and scale from the Westphalian model of literary comparativism, for it opens up historical and conceptual currents that can be deployed retroactively to understand how past systems of maritime globalism have impacted the making and refashioning of modern literary worlds, such as, for instance, the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Franco-British maritime world-system that also constitutes the foundations of literary studies as a discipline. This latter, as we shall see, has more than the Atlantic at its heart. An oceanic perspective also offers opportunities to explore new sites, vocabularies, characters, and chronotopes in literary works. Examples of this last include ships, ports, lagoons, and bays as against terrestrial settings such as villages, towns, and cities. Various hybrid maritime languages such as creole, pidgin, and *laskari* intermingle with standard literary tongues to

create rich heteroglossic texts. Caribbean literature, for instance, is unthinkable without local creoles and *patois* generated by the forced oceanic migration of African, Indian, and Chinese labourers to plantations whose owners spoke English, French, or Spanish. Derek Walcott's long poem *Omeros*, in reconstructing the history of the slave trade in the Antilles as a twentieth-century Homeric epic, conferred poetic grandeur on Caribbean creole. Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis* trilogy revives extinct idiolects such as *laskari* and Cantonese pidgin that were spoken by subaltern maritime figures who plied the Indian Ocean trade routes in the nineteenth century. Globally mobile figures such as explorers, naturalists, traders, sailors, lascars, pirates, stowaways, and slaves offer fascinating character types while enriching the field of diaspora studies. The fluidity of oceans also has a material dimension constituted by what Hester Blum refers to as "unboundedness, drift and solvency" (2013: 152). These aqua-immersive features help us conceive global and comparative approaches to literary history in exciting new ways.

Thinking of oceans from a planetary perspective opens up yet another horizon, that of the ecological and the environmental, both of which have become crucial to literary world-making in our time. At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the United Nations proposed a World Oceans Day to mark the indispensability of oceans to life on this planet. The manifesto notes: "Our rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, and even the oxygen in the air we breathe are all ultimately provided and regulated by the sea . . . the world's oceans – their temperature, chemistry, currents and life – drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for mankind" ("Why Celebrate" [2019]). Oceans are frequently referred to as the last global commons, a final frontier that will no more belong to all human kind as the rush to privatize and militarize them accelerates (Price 2017). Their ability to invoke a world that is one and shared by all human and nonhuman species resonates with the universalist and planetary aspirations of world literature. In short, the connections between political cartography, cognitive mapping, literary history, and aesthetic representation are rendered particularly complex when seen through the lens of the oceanic.

The exposition in this chapter unfolds in two parts. In the first, I offer a schematic historiography of oceanic literary comparativism pioneered by scholars in the 1990s and 2000s, and offer illustrative case studies of "terraqueous transregionalisms" that open up temporal vistas, imaginative geographies, and aesthetic forms that trouble nation-based and terrestrial approaches (Blum 2008; Bashford 2018). Terraqueous transregionalisms can be conceived as hybrid land-water assemblages that overflow boundaries of literary history

demarcated by conventional cultural and geopolitical categories such as nation, race, ethnicity, and language. In the second half of the chapter, I turn to environmental and planetary perspectives on oceanic studies that bring into the ambit of world literature zones both habitable and uninhabitable, human and nonhuman, from the equator to the poles.

Oceanic Literary Historiography

Oceanic histories of literature peaked in the 1990s and the early 2000s in response to the proliferation of discourses on globalization and the environmental crisis. Among the pioneers are Isabel Hofmeyr, Ronit Ricci, Pier Larson, and Gaurav Desai on the Indian Ocean; Epeli Hau'ofa, Albert Wendt, and Teresa Teaiwa on the Pacific; Paul Gilroy and Ian Baucom on the Black Atlantic; Kerry Bystrom and Joseph Slaughter on the South Atlantic; Elizabeth Deloughrey on the Caribbean and the Pacific; and Christopher Connery and Adriana Craciun on the Arctic. Margaret Cohen's work on the sea and the modern novel, and Hester Blum's work on antebellum American sea narratives and the print culture of polar exploration are also part of this boom. In 2010, the *PMLA* dedicated a special issue to oceanic studies to acknowledge this resurgence and address the complicated business of doing literary history from a global and comparative maritime perspective. Why, asks Margaret Cohen in this volume, have historians of the Euro-American novel not paid attention to major breakthroughs in the maritime sphere such as the discovery of the chronometer by clockmaker John Harrison in 1759; the introduction of lemon juice to beat scurvy, the scourge of sailors, by physician Gilbert Blane in 1795; and the use of the first steamboat in 1807? All of these played a major role in making seafaring safer and transformed the very experience of life at sea. How can these historical landmarks be knotted with familiar land-based milestones like the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Industrial Revolution (2010: 658)?

In the same issue of *PMLA,* Teresa Teaiwa explores the conundrum of writing a literary history of the Pacific. The conundrum is threefold. One, the sheer volume of canonized Euro-American writing on the Pacific during the high imperial phase overshadows the work of modern creative writers indigenous to this oceanic world or transplanted there via the indenture system. The writings of Louis de Bougainville, Samuel Wallis, James Cook, Herman Melville, Somerset Maugham, Jack London, for instance, continue to have greater global resonance than those of Albert Wendt (Samoan), Epeli

Hau'ofa (Tongan), Witi Ihimaera (Maori), Siga Figiel (Samoan), and Subramani (Fijian-Indian). Further, despite writing in English, these Pacific writers have not exactly been able to break into the postcolonial and global writers' circuit in the way the stars of the canon from South Asia, Africa, and Latin America – Márquez, Ghosh, Rushdie, Soyinka – have. Two, the global historiography of the Pacific ranges from the eighteenth century to the present, also the era of imperial discovery of this oceanic region. This tends to obscure the long history of pre-contact indigenous cultures in this vast sea of islands that stretches from Hawaii to Micronesia, Melanesia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. The eclipse of indigenous worlds is sought to be countered by the nomenclature "Oceania" as opposed to the Pacific. "Oceania" was used by French geographers Adrien-Hubert Brue and Jules-Sebastien-Cesar in 1832 but never exactly caught on in modern European historiography. The term was revived by the Samoan writer and educator Albert Wendt in his 1974 essay "Toward a New Oceania." In the 1990s, the distinguished Tongan writer-activist Epeli Hau'ofa gave his imprimatur to the term and called it the "sea of islands," a terraqueous zone of continuous indigenous habitation over many millennia. This decolonial gesture has enabled literary and cultural historians to move away from cartographies of the Pacific Rim and Asia-Pacific that typically shape global thinking on the Pacific, while also exploring myriad indigenous languages that have shaped lifeworlds in this interregion. As Maori scholar Alice Te Punga Somerville notes, "Where I come from, Oceania is widely . . . known as Te Moananuni-a-kiwa, the great ocean of Kiwa. It is also known as the domain of Tangaroa, one of the many gods of the Maori pantheon, whose realm extends over the sea. This ocean is thus connected to a specific ancestral navigator (Kiwa), and the guardianship of a specific deity (Tangaroa), [and] also rather literally, to the Maori language" (Sommerville 2017: 26). This focus on the indigenous genealogy of the Pacific takes us to the third conundrum in formulating a *longue durée* view of this region's history: the predominance of orality as a dominant trope in world literary scholarship that pays scarce attention to the vital importance of the visual. The visual symbology of Oceania has a far longer genealogy and has inspired both the oral and the written literatures of the region. That a visual semiotics is essential to an indigenous literary history is demonstrated by the Tongan sculptor from New Zealand Filipe Tohi, who did a three-dimensional modelling of ancient *lalava*, coconut fiber lashings that are the staple of Pacific objects and architectural specimens, and discovered a system of symbols that can be broken down into linguistic morphemes (Teaiwa 2010: 735). A literary historian of the Pacific as Oceania

is thus compelled to make a case for multiple genealogies of literary production: visual, oral, and written. The polygenesis of Pacific literatures that Teaiwa advocates goes to the heart of this volume's focus on overlapping and disjunctive temporal thresholds of world literary production that continue to resonate in the present. A literary history of Oceania has to contend with multiple timescales: as historian Sujit Sivasundaram puts it, "simultaneously tens of thousands of years (human movement into Papua New Guinea and Australia), seven to eight centuries (human movement across Polynesia), five centuries (European maritime traffic) and two centuries (European colonization)" (2018: 23).

When we turn to the Indian Ocean, the historiographical challenges are of a different order. Rich linguistic, textual, and philological traditions existed across the arc of this ocean before the arrival of Europeans – in Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Tamil, Hindi, Swahili, Gujarati, Malay, and Javanese. These continue to be active literary worlds and, since the fifteenth century, have been infused with European literary traditions. The rise of Islamic literary networks from the thirteenth century, extending from West Asia to South and Southeast Asia, can scarcely be understood without grasping the complex history of the Indian Ocean. Few literary scholars have attempted to write a comparative history of travel and exchange along this arc, though there are many significant scholarly tracts on each of the above-mentioned literary and linguistic traditions. One exception is Ronit Ricci, who has worked on two monumental projects this past decade, a book, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (2011), and a project on manuscript cultures of Malays in Sri Lanka going back to the seventeenth century and encompassing Arabic, Tamil, Malay, and Javanese languages.[2] The history of Malays in Sri Lanka dates back to the rise of Dutch maritime expeditions into the Java Sea. When the Malays were brought to Sri Lanka as political exiles or prisoners, they carried textual treasures that are now mostly privately owned. Ricci draws our attention to manuscript gems such as an interlinear Arab–Malay copy of the eighteenth-century *Maulud Nabi Sharaf Al-Alam*, a poetic genre in the "best of humankind" mode written typically on the anniversary of Prophet Mohammad. Other gems include

> an undated printed booklet in Romanized Malay containing the locally composed poem *Dendang Sayang Pantun Seylon*; a compendium of prayers in Malay and Arabic; a compendium in Arabic and English; a 1914 collection

2 Ricci won an "Endangered Archives" grant from the British Library to transcribe these sources. See Ricci 2019.

> of personal notes by M.M. Saldin; an 1893 collection of Arabic poems with English translation published in Bombay; a very small booklet of Arabic incantations; a printed Malay book from 1935 Singapore that offers gender-related advice.[3]

The remarkable travel of the Arabic script across South and Southeast Asia via Indian Ocean trade routes and the hybridization of languages across these regions constitutes one of the most exciting developments in world literature. Ricci's *Islam Translated* offers a history of book travel via the Indian Ocean route from West to Southeast Asia through a single case study. The focus of the study is a famous Arabic text, *Book of One Thousand Questions*, that narrates the conversion of Abdullah Ibnu Salam from Judaism to Islam. From the tenth century onward, this book was translated into Tamil, Malay, Javanese, Buginese, Persian, and Urdu. Ricci tracks the translations and adaptations of this work into Javanese, Malay, and Tamil in South and Southeast Asia between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. In the process, she offers a fine-grained philological and literary history of one of the most significant political and cultural shifts in world history: the spread of Islam from Arabia to the eastern hemisphere. The Indian Ocean and its various small seas, archipelagoes, islands, and littoral bays were key conduits in this massive religious transformation.

The story continues into the nineteenth century with the port of Bombay at the heart of an Islamic public sphere with "its iron printing-presses [producing] books in Persian and Arabic, English and Urdu, Malay and Swahili" (Green 2011: 3). The print public sphere supported a syncretic religious economy of entrepreneurs, trading firms, writers, poets, activists, and public intellectuals during the colonial era. The distinguished historian of Indian Ocean literatures Isabel Hofmeyr expands this history in her book *Gandhi's Printing Press* (2013). She traces an Indian Ocean public sphere from the 1880s to World War I that played a major role in global print cultures stretching from present-day East Africa to Iraq, India, Southeast Asia, and the western shores of Australia. This period that saw a boom in periodicals and tracts in languages ranging from Swahili, Arabic, Hindi, Gujarati, and English that influenced the anti-imperial writings of Mahatma Gandhi, among others, and transformed the literary imaginings of peoples across the Afro-Asia sphere during the high colonial period. With the *Ibis* novels of Amitav Ghosh and the Zanzibari novels of Abdul Razak Gurnah – works traversing the Indian Ocean world from East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Indian

3 See also Ricci 2016.

archipelago to the bays and estuaries in the South China Sea – we are now aware of the critical role played by this maritime route in the consolidation of British Empire and also in the adaptive survival and flourishing of indigenous cultures across the eastern hemisphere. Both Ghosh and Gurnah stretch this historiography back into the pre-imperial phase and write about the centuries-old trading diasporas of Arabia, India, and China that intersected with the history of European maritime imperialism, and also of histories of slavery that preceded the transatlantic slave trade. The past decade has witnessed a surge of literary and historical scholarship on Indian Ocean worlds. Two in particular bear mention: Gaurav Desai's *Commerce with the Universe: Africa, India and the Afrasian Imagination* (2013) and Clare Anderson's *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790–1920* (2012). Anderson's book is a *tour de force*. It recovers various genres of life writing from archives across the region, including those found in oral and visual media, of slaves, convicts, indentured laborers, pirates, sailors, and traders. The work weaves together littorals and ports of the Dutch, French, British, and Malagasy empires, and traces the historical links between penal settlements and colonial labor practices. Peopled by characters who would otherwise not feature in literary histories of empires, such works radically transform our understanding of modern maritime imperialism and the rise of nation-based literary histories.

This brings me to the oceanic zone around which modern literary histories have coalesced since the nineteenth century: the Atlantic. English and French literatures led the way and constituted a kind of universal gold standard in the field, or the literary Greenwich meridian, as Pascale Casanova puts it (2004). The consolidation of British and French empires across much of the globe from the 1830s to the 1930s coincided with the rise of literary studies as a discipline, first in the colonies, and then in Europe and America. English literature in particular, and its riches from the era of *Beowulf* to the Victorian period, became the standard for literary historians and was aggressively promoted as a force for cultural transformation in the colonies of Asia and Africa. This went hand-in-hand with a vast philological enterprise to master the linguistic and literary riches of Asia, the history of which is all too well known since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978. The story of the impact of this orientalist philological enterprise on the emergence of the idea of world literature in the nineteenth century has been narrated with great finesse in recent years by scholars such as Aamir Mufti, Siraj Ahmed, and Baidik Bhattacharya (see also Bhattacharya, Chapter 5, this volume). Not surprisingly, the North Atlantic, and especially the Anglo-French literary

historiography, did not intersect with this colonial philological history. Nor did the study of Greek and Latin classics that was part of the core humanistic curriculum in European universities for hundreds of years. As was typical of the nineteenth-century teleological view of the world in which history moved West, the literary riches of the non-European world were seen as inferior to that of the North Atlantic world. And so it remained well into the twentieth century with the rise of America. The victory of the Allies in World War II consolidated a North Atlantic worldview as the new universal. This was initiated during the war by the Joint Declaration of Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt in Newfoundland on August 14, 1941. The Declaration, soon dubbed as the Atlantic Charter, envisioned an Anglo-American alliance that would lay the foundation for a postwar world era of peace based on principles of "sovereign rights and self-government" and the rights of "all the men in all lands." This Declaration subsequently became the legal basis for the Charter of the United Nations in 1945 (Bystrom and Slaughter 2018: 1–2). These developments channeled the Atlantic imaginary toward imperial and national histories with a narrative from "encounter to emancipation between the late fifteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (Armitage 2018: 95).

The rise of Atlantic *world* histories toward the end of the twentieth century complicated this triumphalist political and literary history by drawing attention to the transatlantic slave trade across both the north and the south of the ocean, and to cross-cutting networks of slave and indentured labor across the Indian Ocean after the abolition of slavery. Here the impact of Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (1993) is hard to miss. This work launched a flood of literary and cultural histories on the transatlantic slave trade and experiences of the Middle Passage found in oral and written sources across this oceanic zone. Gilroy's work offers a counter-history of modernity, one that makes the experience of the slaves and the triangular history of slave trade between Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, and North America foundational to a modern industrial consciousness. This counter-history is embodied in the image of the slave ship, one haunted by the cries of shackled Africans as they endured violent journeys into worlds of backbreaking labor and unimaginable tyranny. This is a fractal history characterized by rupture, repetition, non-synchronicity, sedimentation, and partial witnessing. It is also an abyssal and alluvial history, as the poet-historian of Caribbean Creolité Edouard Glissant reminds us, one that reaches into the very depths of oceanic terror:

> Imagine two-hundred human beings crammed into a space barely capable of containing a third of them. Imagine vomit, naked flesh, swarming lice, the

> dead slumped, the dying crouched . . . Worn down in a debasement more eternal than apocalypse . . . What is terrifying partakes of the abyss . . . Experience of the abyss lies inside and outside the abyss. The torment of those who never escaped it: straight from the belly of the slave ship into the violent belly of the ocean depths they went. ([1990] 1997: 5–7)

The Atlantic has often been referred to as the "unmarked gravesite" of thousands of slaves who died on ships and were unceremoniously thrown overboard (Deloughrey 2017: 35). Unlike land-based death rites, the flowing currents of the ocean deter memorializing rituals. The graves remain alluvial and swirl around in the abyssal ocean "whose time is marked by . . . balls and chains gone green" (Glissant [1990] 1997: 6). One of the darkest episodes in the history of the Atlantic slave trade is the *Zong* Massacre of 1781, also the subject of Ian Baucom's monumental work of literary theory and philosophical history *Specters of the Atlantic* (2005). *Zong*, a slave ship belonging to a Liverpool merchant family, sailed from the coast of West Africa on September 6, 1781, with 440 slaves, each valued at thirty pounds. The ship encountered rough weather and the crew realized they were inadequately stocked. They had to contend with sick inmates including the shackled slaves, many of whom were dying. In order to conserve what provisions were left for the crew and the healthy slaves, Captain Collingwood ordered 133 slaves to be thrown into the ocean. When the ship landed in Jamaica, the Captain lodged an insurance claim against lost cargo, the 133 drowned slaves. When the insurers refused to pay, the Liverpool merchant Thomas Gilbert took the matter to court. What ensued was a historic trial as the sitting judge, Chief Justice Lord Mansfield, ruled against the shipping syndicate for deliberately causing the death of the slaves. The *Zong* trial was the catalyst for the abolitionist movement in Britain, for it caught the attention of the anti-slavery groups led by Olaudah Equiano and Grenville Sharp who took the matter to parliament. Baucom's book radiates out of this episode and illuminates for us a history of speculative capitalism that informs theories of value, of abstract personhood, of literary genres, of political formations, and of catastrophic politics that constitutes the ground of Atlantic modernity from the eighteenth century and that continues to reverberate in our times. The *Zong* becomes emblematic of the long history of capitalism and its violent foundations. The field of Romanticism, and especially its consciousness about historical time and the living past, what Baucom calls "hauntological time consciousness" (31), is unthinkable without the history of the slave trade, as is philosophical history in the Hegelian-Marxian mode that continues to inform discourses around capitalist development: "The segment of

time we call modernity piles up from a starting point, and that starting point is the ramified system of transatlantic slavery . . . [a system] crystallized in three enduring images: the image of the plantation, the image of the slave ship, and the image of the drowning slave" (321). Referring to the powerful literary output on the history of slavery, including novels such as Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts*, which fictionalizes the *Zong* massacre, Baucom writes: "It is not the status of the past that is at issue in the *Beloved*, *Omeros, Feeding the Ghosts* . . . *Zong!*, or the broader Black Atlantic philosophy of history that such texts exemplify, but rather the nature, the extent, the elasticity, the scope, the very *existence* of the present in which Hegel and his heirs have taught us to believe" (324).

That the plantation matrix in such accounts acquires a hemispheric and oceanic interconnectivity is not in doubt. The making of Euro-America on the back of the slave trade provides a powerful and sobering counterpoint to the triumphant theatricality of Franco-British maritime domination, while simultaneously connecting literary dicourses and themes previously understood as territorially and culturally distinct. The paradigm of the Black Atlantic has revolutionized the way we study the emergence of modern French, British, American, Caribbean, and African literatures today.

In recent years, the paradigm has been critiqued for its inability to move beyond the triangular history of the oceanic north encompassing Euro-America and the west coast of Africa. What about slave traffic between Africa and Latin America and the history of the South Atlantic, ask scholars of lusophone and Hispanic literatures (Bystrom and Slaughter 2018)? And what about the historical links between the Black Atlantic and the Indian Ocean (Hofmeyr 2007; Hooper and Eltis 2013; and Cohen 2017)? Finally, what kind of a shadow does the Black Atlantic cast on African literary history in general? Should all African literatures be read under the sign of slavery?[4] These questions point to the challenges that the global turn in Atlantic studies has faced in recent years. These are threefold: "First, to integrate various streams of Atlantic history – political, economic and cultural; black and white Atlantics; national and transnational histories; second, to press against conventional chronological and geographical boundaries; and third, to define the identity of the field without cutting it off from other areas of historical inquiry" (Armitage 2018: 95). Attempts to write a single-scale history of the Atlantic appear doomed to failure for this oceanic region. In the early years of

4 See Yogita Goyal's edited special issue of *Research In African Literatures* on "Africa and the Black Atlantic" (2014).

this century, David Armitage formulated a tri-scalar approach to the Atlantic that has since been adopted widely in oceanic literary and cultural studies: *circum-Atlantic* (a zone of exchange, circulation, and transmission); *trans-Atlantic* (comparative political history of empires, nations, and states girding the ocean); and *cis-Atlantic* (local and micro-histories of any region in and around the Atlantic). These categories have proved immensely generative, especially in bringing together scholars of transregional, transnational, national, local, and micro-histories around oceans. This scalar approach cannot but resonate with debates in world literature that continue to polarize scholars of national and local traditions from those who venture into large-scale transregional, hemispheric, and global literary histories. Recently, Armitage offered an additional triad of concepts that resonates strongly with comparative oceanic studies: *infra-Atlantic history* (the subregional history of the Atlantic World); *sub-Atlantic history* (the submarine history of the Atlantic world); *extra-Atlantic history* (the supraregional history of the Atlantic world) (2018: 97).

The urging to attend to literary and cultural histories of Atlantic slavery south of the equator, as we see among scholars of the South Atlantic, resonates with this triadic lens, as do calls to attend to the entanglement of Black Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds in tracing the movement of slave and indentured labor on European maritime trade routes. Afro-Latin American and Lusophone South Atlantic studies deploy both *infra-* and *extra-* approaches to the Black Atlantic. Portuguese and Spanish maritime colonialization of Latin America transported more African slaves to that region than did the British to North America (Gates, Jr. 2011). The South Atlantic was called the *Mare Aethiopicum* (Ethiopian Sea). The historian of the Iberian Atlantic Luiz Felipe de Alencastro casts light on Jesuit slave traders who navigated the South Atlantic from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century:

> The Society of Jesus was the only religious order that was continually present in Angola and the Americas from the sixteenth century until its expulsion from Portugal in 1759 and from Spain in 1767. As a result, the Jesuits, who sold slaves from Angola [into] Brazil and owned properties tended by slaves on both sides of the ocean, are at the center of the South Atlantic slave network. More than any other religious order, the Jesuits developed moral justification for slavery and the slave trade during this first era of globalization.
>
> (2017: 36)

Lusophone, Hispanic, and African scholars have written extensively on literary worlds across this southern Atlantic region that challenge the myth

of the Atlantic dominated by a handful of British merchants plying slaves into North America (Armillas-Tiseyra 2018; Bystrom 2018; Mahler 2018). Kerry Bystrom and Joseph Slaughter's volume' *The Global South Atlantic*' emphasizes the global dimension of this body of water, "that point to the multiplicity of visions and versions of the Atlantic . . . especially those constructed from the Global South" (Bystrom and Slaughter 2018: 20). "Visions" and "versions," in other words, often left out by both Euro-American North Atlantic and Black Atlantic histories. Indian Ocean literary worlds, for instance, are disconcertingly absent from slave and labor histories of the Black Atlantic. The history of the Franco-British transatlantic slave trade was inextricably connected to the history of indentured labour (commonly known as *coolie trade*) from India and Malaya to outposts of the British and French empires, primarily to the Mascarenhas archipelago and the Caribbean. With the abolition of slavery, the British Empire introduced the indenture system to transport laborers to plantations around the world. The ships used in the Atlantic slave trade were repurposed to transport these laborers, a fact of history that Amitav Ghosh allegorizes in his depiction of the sea vessel *Ibis* in his eponymous trilogy. The Indian Ocean trade routes served as the primary conduit for this transportation. Indians, Chinese, Africans, and Arabs co-mingled in zones that continued to experience the dark memories of slave trade. Frederic Douglass, the author of the novella *The Heroic Slave*, wrote in 1871 about his distress at the grim reality of the coolie trade (Foner 1988). A century later, the Mauritian poet Khal Torabully articulated a transnational poetics of "coolitude," drawing on the pan-African "Négritude" movement of the 1930s and arguing for the centrality of the sea voyage – as both destructive and creative force – in the recovering of the coolie's identity and story (Carter and Torabully, 2002). The slave trade in the Indian Ocean preceded that in the Atlantic by many centuries. Not only did the Indian Ocean navigate Portuguese slave ships from Asia and East Africa, but this oceanic world (along with the Mediterranean and Red Seas) was also at the heart of the Arab slave trade from the eighth century to the nineteenth. Slaves from Ethiopia, the Sahara region, and southeast Africa were found in the entire Arab world during this period.

Recent scholarship on the eighteenth-century cartographic histories of the "Global Indies" is another instance of this entanglement between the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic (Cohen 2017). Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the hemispheric connection between these oceanic regions was signaled by the term *Indies* – east and west. The two were seen

as contiguous geographies and economies. Thomas Jefferson famously wrote in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* that "if the two continents of Asia and America be separated at all, it is only by a narrow strait" (107).[5] Abbé Raynal and Denis Diderot's four-volume tome *The History of the Two Indies* is a monumental theorization and imaginative cultural history of this concept.[6] In turn, theories and imaginaries of the two Indies gained reality through political legislation: "By late 1760s most government officials recognized that the Indian and American economies could not be governed as discrete units" (Koehn 1994: 206). This led to legislations over the next three decades that enabled Britain to build a circuitry of governance across the two Indies that straddled the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. One of these, the infamous Tea Act of 1773, which forced the thirteen colonies of America to buy tea from India to offset the debt of the British East India Company, led to the famous revolt on the Atlantic coast: the Boston Tea Party, which, in turn, catalyzed the American War of Independence. Advocates of the first North American transcontinental railroad publicized their scheme as an "American Road to India" that would "realize the grand ambition of Columbus." As Ashley Cohen notes: "Walt Whitman's poem celebrating the railroad's completion in 1871 is aptly titled 'A Passage to India'" (2017: 12). By the mid-nineteenth century, the meta-geography of the *Indies* fell out of world maps, but literary works of an earlier era help us trace a powerful imaginary that crosscut Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds at a time when the British maritime forces were beginning to consolidate their political hold across the hemispheres. Where literary historiography is concerned, it is important to remember that the *Indies* straddling the two oceans first circulated as an imaginary construct in eighteenth-century texts before being taken up by imperial politics as it entered yet another cycle of capitalist accumulation.

The *infra-* and the *extra-* approaches to oceanic studies also enable the emergence of terraqueous transregionalisms – thalassic zones smaller than continents but larger than nations that do not coincide with familiar geopolitical divisions of the world. These help us imagine literary historical connections that bypass familiar national and hemispheric circuits. For instance, seventeenth-century Luso-South Atlantic history has fascinating connections to a micro-history of the Indian Ocean, that of the Portuguese-governed territory of Goa on India's west coast. Goa gained independence from

5 A. Cohen cites this passage in her essay "The Global Indies: Historicizing Oceanic Metageographies" (2017).

6 See Srinivas Aravamudan's *Tropicopolitans* (1999) for a fascinating analysis of this Raynal and Diderot's *History*.

Portuguese rule in 1961 and became part of the Indian state fourteen years after India's independence from British rule. The Portuguese slave trade was triangulated across Brazil, Angola, and Goa. The descendants of both Portuguese slave traders in the South Atlantic and slaves from Angola are found among the Goan population in contemporary India. There are histories of this region that attest to the participation of Goans in the Portuguese slave trade (Arasaratnam 1990). These entangled histories are powerfully depicted in Margaret Mascarenhas's novel *Skin* (2001). The novel dramatizes the conflict between two families: the Miranda de Floreses, wealthy upper-caste beneficiaries of the Portuguese slave trade, and a clan of slaves descended from the Angolan female Prophet Kampa Vita. The novel's title derives from the history of intergenerational violence that simmers under the dark skin of slave descendants such as Saudade and Esperenca, the latter a maid in the De Flores' household who tells the former, "Our mothers live under our skin" (236). There is no space here to analyze the novel in full, but its history of publication, circulation, and reception bears mentioning. Mascerenhas's novel was translated from English into French (2002) and Portuguese (2004) and, apart from Goa, found its readership among lusophone and francophone readers in Africa and Latin America. It was never published in the North Atlantic world nor did it have a wide circulation within India. The historical geography of this novel as well as its publication history exemplify the oblique literary terrains of terraqueous transregionalism – oceanic assemblages that do not coalesce with conventional trajectories of global and national histories.[7]

Another example of such an assemblage can be found in a slice of literary history from the Mascarenes islands, especially around Mauritius and its aqueous surrounds. An eighteenth-century shipwreck off Amber Island, a coral island close to the east coast of Mauritius – the catastrophic accident suffered by *Saint Geran* in 1744 – became the subject of several literary works and was famously captured by Bernardine de Saint Pierre in his best-selling novella *Paul et Virginie* (1787). In tracing the history of this novel, and its impact on French and francophone literary traditions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Francoise Lionnet unearths a fascinating archive that provides the backstory of its key female character, Virginie, the white creole victim of the wreck who embodies an ideal of feminine purity and devotion to the love of her life, Paul. Delving into the historical archive of this wreck in

7 I am indebted to R. Benedito Ferrao's (2014) analysis of Margaret Mascarenhas's *Skin* for this section.

Mauritius, Lionnet discovers two female survivors who were far removed from the Bernardine's portrayal of the pure Virginie: an anonymous black woman and Jeanne Baret, lover of the distinguished French naturalist Philibert Commerson, who accompanied Louis Antoine de Bougainville on his voyage of circumnavigation in 1766–69. Baret disguised herself as a man in this voyage and is historically known as the first white woman to have circumnavigated the globe. None of these women could have served as a model for the pure and unsullied Virginie. In crafting a romantic and sentimental tale, Bernandine offered a "counterpoint to the corruption and depravation, both in Paris and among the colonial elites, that he sought to expose as the fatal consequences of European decadence and degeneration on the eve of the Revolution" (Lionnet 2012: 451). The influence of Bernardine's novella features in histories of the rise of the sentimental novel in eighteenth-century France and Britain. *Paul et Virginie* has also become a foundational fiction for Mauritius, and has inspired writers and artists across Francophone Indian Ocean worlds such as the Mauritian Nobel Laureate J. M. G. Le Clezio, Marie-Therese Humbert, Natacha Appanah, Berni Searle, and Helen Pynor (Lionnet 2012: 451).[8] In recent times, *Paul et Virginie* made a reappearance in the rich intertextual world of Amitav Ghosh's novel *Sea of Poppies* (2008), in which the French-Bengali character of Paulette reads this work at bedtime. Paulette is the semi-orphaned daughter of a French botanist and a creole Mauritian woman, and is nurtured in the local Bengali milieu around the Calcutta Botanic Gardens where her father worked. Brought up by a poor Bengali boatman's wife and her son Jodu from her infancy, she is subsequently adopted by the Burnhams, a wealthy British maritime merchant family living in Bengal. At a key juncture in the novel, Paulette flees her British foster home in disguise on the *Ibis* ship to meet her beloved, Zachary Reid, the ship's first mate and the mixed-race freed son of a slave from Baltimore. She is caught up in the shipwreck with the other inmates of *Ibis*, including convicts and indentured laborers. As the novel tracks the survivors' journey to Mauritius, its portrayal of Paulette resembles the life of Jeanne Baret far more than it does that of the pure Virginie. Even as Ghosh weaves several motifs from Bernardine's novel into his, he breaks from the sentimental tradition in crafting the character of Paulette as an unorthodox cosmopolitan French-Bengali creole who breaks all taboos of gendered behavior. She is learned, intrepid, and resourceful, and suffers from none of the vapidity of romance-era heroines. She survives the journey of *Ibis* across the turbulent waters of the Indian Ocean and into the Mascarenes Islands with

8 The term "foundational fiction" is Doris Sommer's.

great courage, and emerges with a wealth of practical reason that springs from her embrace of her creole cultural roots and her robust adventures with her shipmates across a treacherous oceanic route. Ghosh's novel thus punctures the romantic aura of colonial maritime history, embodied in the pious and virtuous figure of Bernandine's Virginie, and offers in its stead the stark history of extractive and exploitative capitalism that marked colonial-era European adventures at sea. The entwining of an eighteenth-century Mauritian French novella with the history of French literature and its sentimental literary tradition, and a twenty-first-century South Asian novel on nineteenth-century Franco-British maritime history in the Indian Ocean, offers insights into how an oceanic literary perspective can open up aesthetic vistas for world literature unavailable to conventional national and transnational histories.

The Ocean and the Planet

To continue my extrapolation from David Armitage's conceptual triad, we move now into the realm of the *sub-oceanic*, or the submarine as it is most commonly known: a contemplation of oceanic depth as a planetary force. That oceanic histories of the capitalist world system are intertwined with the history of climate change is now global commonsense. Hundreds of years of fossil fuel use that powered the modern world have come back to haunt us in the form of warming oceans, coral bleaching, plastic contamination of marine life, inundated islands, hurricanes, tsunamis, and floods. The scholarship on oceanic literatures and planetary humanities has swelled to such proportions that it will invariably overflow the remit of a single chapter. It ranges across postcolonial and submarine histories of the Caribbean hit by frequent hurricanes, narratives about nuclear waste dumping and disappearing islands in the Pacific Ocean, climate fiction on the impact of sea-level rise on coastal landmasses around the Atlantic, the Pacific, and Indian Oceans, climate change and security narratives in the South China Sea, refugee life writing on Mediterranean crossings by the climate displaced, histories of deep-sea extractivism, reef ecologies, interspecies aesthetic forms, and literary/artistic capture of environmental collapse in the polar regions. This rich and proliferating output, generated in less than decade, will require years of labor by literary historians to constellate into a coherent narrative about key forms, aesthetic trends, generic shifts, and cultural impact. In what follows, I venture a few insights into this burgeoning field comprising the environmental and planetary turn in oceanic literary studies.

If the literary historiography of oceans outlined in the previous section of this chapter traces the contours of human-centered history from premodern times to our own, the planetary turn in oceanic studies envisions a nonhuman temporal arc going back to our evolutionary past and into a geological future hurtling toward a catastrophic warming of the planet and the sixth largest extinction of species the earth has ever witnessed. One notices two distinct temporal trends here. First, an attempt to place pre-modern and modern histories of oceanic crossing within assemblages of natural phenomena such as regional climate terrains, monsoonal zones, tidal ebb and flow, flooding rivers, hurricanes, tsunamis, and snow storms. These natural forces are foregrounded as active agents in the making of human history. The second involves engagement with deep time and a conception of the human as a geological agent. Planetary oceanic studies engage with what Elizabeth Deloughrey calls "sea ontologies," an immersive way of being in the *more-than-human* temporality of the ocean, as also a conception of "maritime space as a multispecies and embodied place in which the oceanic contours of the planet, including its submarine creatures, are no longer outside the history of the human" (2017: 36, 42). Deloughrey's primary inspiration is the distinguished tradition of Caribbean "hydro- and submarine poetics" illuminated in the works of Derek Walcott, Kamau Brathwaite, and Lorna Goodison. As she notes: "While multispecies ethnographies and scholarship on the ontological turn open the way for a new engagement with our submarine others, in Caribbean literature the ocean has long been understood as a material entity . . . The discourse of oceanic submersion in the Caribbean articulates a submarine temporality in which linear models of time are disrupted and ruptured" (33). Lorna Goodison and Kamau Brathwaite work with images evoking the toxic materiality of oceans as they carry the waste of capitalist lifeworlds, including disposable humans such as refugees, fugitives, and slaves. The flow of historical time is repeatedly interrupted in their poems by traumatic knots of submarine memory and immemorial accretions of natural history. Brathwaite's poem "Dream Haiti" collapses two historical moments – the 1981 interdiction agreement between the United States and Haiti that empowered the USA to intercept thousands of Haitian refugees from the sea and forcibly repatriate them; and the long history of surveilling African bodies during the Atlantic slave trade – and allegorizes them in the figure of the narrator who morphs into a boat symbolizing both the modern and the ancient history of Africa. Braided into this boat-human figure is the evolutionary history of the iron age in West Africa as the poem invokes Ogun, an ancestral blacksmith figure, the

vodou *Iwa* of metalworking. The painful links between this evolutionary history and that of ironworking in the making of slave ships render the Middle Passage a temporal gravity that cannot be contained within the history of modern capitalism. As with Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott's poems are powerful examples of a submarine aesthetics that reaches back into evolutionary time. His poem "The Schooner *Flight*" interweaves the natural history of the Caribbean with bleached bones of humans nestling in the deep recesses of the sea, remnants of a violent plantation history.

> . . . them corals: brain, fire, sea fans,
> dead-men's fingers, and then, the dead men.
> I saw that powdery sand which was their bones
> Ground white from Senegal to San Salvador.[9]

Corals and powdery sands merge into dead men's remains that also carry the dead weight of sugar, "ground white." In recent years, Caribbean installation artist Jason Decaires Taylor has given material form to the concept of sea ontologies by immersing heavy, life-size figures into the depths of the Caribbean Sea.[10] These are made out of pH-neutral marine-grade cement that can "withstand the tremendous pressure of oceanic currents and are constructed of inert materials to encourage multispecies colonization" (Deloughrey 2017: 36–37). These figures initially resemble humans, but over time multiple oceanic species such as algae, fish, sponges, corals, and hydrozoans begin to reside in these installations, thus irrevocably transforming their anthropomorphic form While our initial impulse on viewing these installations is to think of them as underwater memorials to dead slaves, we soon realize that the shifting ecotones of the figures comprising oceanic flora and fauna are a palimpsest of human and nonhuman time: a stunning rendition of a multispecies submarine aesthetics that also signals the urgency of oceanic warming.

Contemplating Decaires Taylor's multispecies underwater installations brings to mind another immersive, multispecies aesthetic world, that of the Indian Ocean, and more specifically the region around the Bay of Bengal. I am thinking of Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and his latest work, *Gun Island* (2019). Both novels blend natural, historical, and planetary time in their narratives, and are formally shaped by the ferocity of tides and oceanic drifts, not to mention the entanglement of human and nonhuman species. Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* appeared at a time when the idea of

9 Walcott 1988: 349, cited in Deloughrey 2017: 35.

10 See Taylor's online portfolio (n.d.) at www.underwatersculpture.com/works/recent.

"catastrophe" was hitched to geopolitical upheavals surrounding 9/11 and the global war on terror. The term *climate change* had only just begun to emerge into public consciousness. This term and the idea of the Anthropocene do not appear in the novel. Before the emergence of climate change as an overarching frame, concerns about population growth, industrial pollution, nuclear contamination, endangered species, and resource shortage dominated perceptions of ecological crisis. Climate change brought the phenomenon of global warming into focus along with catastrophic scenarios of sea-level rise and inundation of large coastal zones. Ghosh's novel prefigures this shift and works formally at the cusp of this transition in global environmental consciousness. The novel is a powerful depiction of the role of nonhuman actors such as tides, rivers, bays, tigers, and dolphins in shaping the precarious lives of a community of refugees, social activists, and fisher folk in the mangroves of Sundarbans in the Bay of Bengal at the easternmost edge of India. Sundarban's uncanny ecoscape functions as a metonym of our planet's alterity to the human scheme of things. An aesthetics of geo-alterity saturates the novel and is one of its most powerful features. Another aspect of the novel's planetary aesthetic is its displacement of human exceptionalism and its breathtaking, scientifically informed depiction of multispecies relationality through the figures of the endangered Irrawady dolphin; the cetologist, Pia Roy; the fisherman, Fokir; and the tides in which they explore, swim, or even fatally encounter a world teeming with cetaceans, crabs, shrimps, and other aquatic creatures.[11] *The Hungry Tide* is the substance of another chapter in these volumes written by Sarah Nuttall, so I shall leave my analysis here with these brief comments.

Ghosh's latest novel, *Gun Island,* takes up the challenge he offered to literary novelists in his nonfiction tract *The Great Derangement*: *Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016): that they seriously rethink their realist frames and engage with the uncanny force of the nonhuman and the larger planetary world in their creative work. The mystery of the gun island unfolds in an extraordinary tale of climate upheavals and mass migrations stretching from the perturbations of the "Little Ice Age" in the seventeenth century to our contemporary crisis of climate displacement. The current refugee and migration problem – attributed to climate change – that has led to the rise of the far right and neo-fascist groups across the Americas, Europe, and the Anglo-Pacific world resonates throughout the novel. The novel – part thriller, part folklore, and part treatise on climate change – revolves around

11 See Ganguly 2020 for a detailed analysis of Ghosh's novels.

the mystery of a folk figure, *bonduki sadagar* (literally, gun merchant), featuring in a premodern Bengali text, and the protagonist Deenu's quest for the origin myth that begins in the Sundarbans – the deltaic region in the Bay of Bengal that Ghosh portrayed with such power in *The Hungry Tide*. What follows is a layered story of climate upheavals, natural disasters, unpredictable encounters, and philological discoveries across an oceanic realm stretching from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean over 400 years. Venice is revealed as the source of the term *bonduki* for its long history of gun and warships manufacture, hence *Gun Island*. Ghosh plays adroitly with early modern mythographies of sea power that converged in and around Venice. Venice's Arsenale was the largest industrial complex in the world before the Industrial Revolution. Ghosh situates Venice at the heart of his cataclysmic oceanic adventure tale, thus reviving its medieval and early modern glory as an imperial naval power whose reach extended to the waters across South and Southeast Asia. The novel traces an imaginary geography of encounters across this Indo-Mediterranean terraqueous zone and offers us a glimpse of what it might mean to untether oceanic aesthetics from post-Mercator realist cartography.

An Indian Ocean literary figure who literalizes this untethering is Abdulrazak Gurnah, the fiction writer from Zanzibar. Gurnah's short story "Mid-morning Moon" (2011) features a fifteenth-century *mappa mundi* created by a Venetian cartographer-artist, Fra Mauro. A copy of this map hangs in the apartment of a tutor in Zanzibar who teaches the protagonist East African history. The map features the Indian Ocean world in all its cultural, material, and environmental complexity before the rise of the Europeans. The East African littoral and the Cape, in particular, feature at the center of a *dhow* trading culture that eventually morphed into a capitalist world-system with the flow of Iberian trading ships. This Venetian map creates a world that was all but lost a century later. The Mercator projection enlarged the Euro-Atlantic region and rendered Indian Ocean littoral societies peripheral and invisible. Significantly, the *mappa mundi* in Gurnah's story invokes a shipwreck in which the tutor's ancestors perished. An inscription on Mauro's map indicates that this shipwreck was the source of his knowledge of the Cape. Filial history and cartographic aesthetics merge in this story as does the nonhuman oceanic world, for "the *mappa mundi* renders the ocean thick with human and nonhuman activity: waves and currents are inscribed, whales and fish sport between dhows and junks and are interspersed with banners containing the narratives Mauro collected from travelers in Venice" (Samuelson 2017: 23).

The works of Gurnah and Ghosh illuminate an oceanic literary aesthetic that encompasses planetary space–time, natural logic, and human–nonhuman entanglement. What happens when this aesthetic is pushed to the very limits of human endeavor across the frozen oceans: the Arctic and the Antarctic? This takes us to environmental concerns at the ends of the earth, a region that resonates with fears of environmental collapse due to ice sheet melting. At once liquid and frozen, the poles pose an unusual challenge to ecological concerns about indigenous habitations, loss of species, resource extraction, and militaristic occupation. What insights might polar literary history offer us? In what ways are these polar histories entangled with histories of maritime empires? In what follows I briefly touch upon the work of two literary historians, Adriana Craciun on the Arctic, and Isabel Hofmeyr on the sub-Antarctic world.

Antarctica is typically perceived as both a high militarized zone and an extra-terrestrial habitat – abiotic, acultural, alien – and a proxy for outer space with which to think of both our geological agency in transforming this planet and our jolting experience of alterity as one species among millions to inhabit this planet. The competition for territorial access to the South Pole among imperial powers has a long history. Hofmeyr's essay, "Southern by Degrees: Islands and Empires in the South Atlantic, Indian Ocean and the Sub-Antarctic World" (2018), offers a comparative South–South perspective on the modern scramble for Antarctica. Her cartographic history encompasses Argentina, Chile, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, which have all participated in this scramble, often as proxies for major imperial powers. In particular, Hofmeyr traces a history of literary crossings across the South Atlantic, the southern Indian Ocean, and the sub-Antarctic region through three key literary texts. Her focus is on islands across this southern swathe that have served as carceral and military outposts of Britain and America throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Saint Helena, Ascension Island, and Tristan Da Cunha, in particular, straddle the sub-Antarctic and have featured in British and South African literature. An example is H. Rider Haggard's *Mary of Marion Isle* (1929), an imperial adventure romance around the islands of the Southern Ocean and the sub-Antarctic world. The novel is also read as a "Robinsonade" – part of a subgenre that emulates Defoe's classic. Marion Isle in the novel is conceived as a eugenically pure utopia of white colonial heterosexual families propagating civilizational values of the imperial race. Drafted during World War I when Britain's global imperial rule was beginning to fray, the novel's extravagant adventures can well be seen as a "late imperial paroxysm," a foray into unconquered virgin lands,

even as other colonized territories were straining to break free (Hofmeyr 2018: 90). This novel can be contrasted with two other literary works, Yvette Christiansë's *Imprendehora* (2009), a collection of poems, and Mojisola Adebayo's play *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odysssey* (2007). Both works are resolutely anti-imperial and weave in histories of plantation capitalism and slave trade in their Antarctic imaginings as the final frontier of colonialism. The setting of Christiansë's poems is Saint Helena and the title of her poem refers to a slave ship of the same name (translated as "Enterprise" in English) "seized by British patrols in the Indian Ocean with those on board being declared 'liberated Africans' before being delivered to Saint Helena as indentured labor" (Hofmeyr 2018: 91). Images of scraps and flotsam from violent oceanic histories saturate the geopoetics of this island, even as traumatized slave voices seep into our consciousness. Adebayo's play *Moj of the Antarctic* recreates the real-life story of a runaway American slave woman, Ellen Craft, who fled her captivity in disguise. The Antarctic setting works brilliantly as a site of escape and rejuvenation, and offers a riposte to the eugenic utopian projection of Haggard's novel. Christiansë's poetic work, along with Adebayo's play, entwine this colonial history with natural and geological timelines through the figure of the albatross and images of continental drift. Adebayo's protagonist Moj visualizes the albatross soaring with the spirit of slaves and bearing, Christ-like, the sins of slavery:

> The spirits of drowned sailors
> Jumping bravely
> Into the ocean waves
> Ascend into the albatross
> Which soars the sky
> In the shape of a cross![12]

The play also imagines a geologic landmass of continental scale, Gondwana, that once united the southern world stretching from Antarctica to South Asia, South Africa, and South America. Adebayo envisions Gondwana as a landmass connecting Africa and Antarctica across a geological timescale. This renders visible an imaginary continuum of southern oceanic planetary time that exceeds the frame of a myopic modern history of northern triumphalism. Antarctica is where this triumphalism meets its limits.

Adriana Craciun's research on British manuscript and print cultures on Arctic explorations from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century uncovers

12 Lines cited in Hofmeyr 2018: 95.

yet another fascinating history of the limits of maritime imperialism. Eighteenth-century perspectives on maritime adventures as the locus of both commercial and ethical discourses encountered their limits in the polar seas of the north. These raised questions both practical and philosophical: "Practically, how could one pass through the barrier of ice and to China and India? . . . Philosophically, why would nature or God withhold entire regions from Europe's commercial access, making them so inhospitable as to be seemingly lifeless and incapable of cultivation, improvement and even traversal?" (Craciun 2010: 695). The Arctic's incompatibility with Europe's civilizational mission and the threat it posed to Britain's imperial ambition were often envisioned in images of terror and demonic force in the poetry of the time. The extreme winter of 1789–99 propelled William Cowper to write a poem, "On the Ice-Islands Seen Floating in the Germanic Ocean." The "horrid wand'rers of the Deep" – a reference to gigantic icebergs floating in the North Sea – are for Cowper a premonition of extinction and death. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the frozen Arctic conjured the limits of human domination. Images of ocean and glacier collapsing into a terrifying continental mass haunt the European maritime powers, as we see in this description by Elisha Kent Kane, whom Craciun cites: "Here was a plastic, moving, semi-solid mass, obliterating life, swallowing rocks and islands, and ploughing its way with irresistible march through the crust of an investing sea" (2010: 695). One fascinating vignette of this polar history is a vast print culture around the melting of Greenland toward the end of the Little Ice Age that spanned five centuries, from the 1300s to the 1800s. Around 1817, the melting ice of Greenland attracted the attention of whalers who alerted scientists and explorers at the Royal Society, including Joseph Banks. The potential to expand its extractive reach to a melting Arctic thrilled the British Admiralty, which began propagating a theory of the Open Polar Sea throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The parallels with our time can scarcely be missed. The scramble for the Arctic and its mineral riches by Russia, China, and the United States is yet another story of the contemporary entanglement of human and planetary history.

To conclude, oceanic literary histories have evolved in ways that align powerfully with cartographic and temporal experimentation in the field of world literature. They have become increasingly comparative and transregional; they resist dominant chronologies and geopolitical formations shaped by the capitalist world-system and Euro-American imperialism; they explore multiple genealogies of literary forms that in turn offer unexpected insights

into well-known texts and traditions; they operate on multiple scales ranging from small islands, littorals, and archipelagoes to vast interregions and transregions; and they help us grasp the catastrophic planetary impact of human world-making. Oceans serve as a powerful symbol of what might well be conceived as the last frontier of a universal global commons on this planet. What is world literature after all without this universal horizon?

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24

Mediterranean Worlds in the Long Nineteenth Century

KONSTANTINA ZANOU

Does it make sense to talk about Mediterranean literature or, indeed, the Mediterranean world itself during the nineteenth century? What was left of the sea in modern times, after it had lost its significance in the global economy, and especially after it had been compartmentalized into strictly delineated national cultures, languages, and nation-states? Since the official birth of the field of Mediterranean studies in the celebrated pages of Fernard Braudel, historians have by and large, implicitly or explicitly, answered this question by handing their pen over to anthropologists – by acknowledging, that is, that as we approach the present, the Mediterranean has ceased to exist as a category of historical analysis (Braudel 1949).[1] In literary history, likewise, where the Mediterranean was already a latecomer, the handful of scholars who have studied their chosen subjects within its maritime framework have done so exclusively in relation to medieval and early modern texts (Mallette 2013; Kinoshita 2014). "It is," as one of them justifiably wrote, "inaccurate to call oneself a 'Hispanist' or an 'Italianist' when one's primary task as a scholar is to disentangle the history of an era that predated the Spanish or the Italian nation by some centuries" (Mallette 2013: 260). But what happens when one studies the period which coincides with the very rise of the nation, the nineteenth century? This was the century which shaped some of the notions that would become, along the way, the default categories by which we understand the world (including history and literature) and by which we organize knowledge in our schools and universities: national histories and cultures, national languages, and literary canons. It was also the period that saw the establishment of philology, history, archaeology, and ethnology as disciplinary fields. In short, this was the century that made us who we are

1 See for example, Horden and Kinoshita 2014. Interesting reflections about the marginalization of the Mediterranean can be found in Cassano 2012, esp. xlv–xlix.

today as scholars. Is it possible to *unlearn* what the nineteenth century taught us?

The present chapter is intended to be an attempt at that *unlearning*. By combining the recent turn of Mediterranean intellectual history toward the long nineteenth century with the insights provided by the above-mentioned literary scholars into earlier periods, I try to reimagine the period in terms of a new cartography of the Mediterranean Sea (Clancy-Smith 2010; Khuri Makdisi 2010; Kirchner Reill 2012; Isabella and Zanou 2016). There is nothing "Mediterraneanist" here, though (Herzfeld 2005): I use the Mediterranean not as an essentialist category referring to a specific geographical entity, but as a metaphor for an intellectual program which will take us beyond the teleology of the nation-state. In other words, this is an attempt to resist the tendency to read history backwards. I am convinced that there is much that the "national literature" paradigm distorts or conceals: a whole world in the margins of the territories under scrutiny, an entire universe of the "in-between" goes missing if we adhere to our conventional nation- and state-centric understanding of these matters. My aim, ultimately, is to offer a reading of nineteenth-century literary history that is regional and maritime rather than national and territorial.[2] Shifting our perspective from "land" to "sea" means not so much losing sight of the powerful role that nation-states came to play in much of the world over the last two centuries, but rather attempting to understand – and read literature into – the dynamic, complex and entangled processes that led us here.

The new cartography I trace here will unfold through two stories. The first narrates the lives of two poets, Ugo Foscolo (1778–1827) and Dionysios Solomos (1798–1857), who set off from the same island in the Ionian Sea, Zante, within twenty years of each other, and ended up becoming the "national poets" of two different countries, Italy and Greece. The second unearths the forgotten story of a multilingual and multinational text, the *Scintille* (Sparks; Tommaseo 1841), composed in the age of nationalism, monolingualism, and folklore studies by the Veneto-Dalmatian intellectual Niccolò Tommaseo. The choice of these specific biographies and texts, needless to say, is not comprehensive but illustrative. What follows may set an example of how we can re-inscribe intellectuals (considered "national

2 Only two other works, so far as I know, have ever attempted, to some extent, to do the same: a special issue of the *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* (Vol. 4, No. 1 [1994]) dedicated to Mediterranean island literature (edited by Arnold Cassola); and a chapter studying Armeno-Turkish texts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Cankara 2018: 173–91).

fathers" of their respective nations) and works (a part today of different canons of "national literature") into their regional and multicultural context.

One Island, Two (Trans)National Poets

Ugo Foscolo (for the Italians) and Dionysios Solomos (for the Greeks) are not just *any* poets; they are emotionally charged ideas and symbols connected to identity. In Italy, Foscolo has countless streets and schools named after him. His stanzas are memorized by schoolchildren and are recited in national celebrations. He is considered to be one of the principal protagonists of the Risorgimento (the movement for Italian independence) and, more than any of his contemporaries, became the poet laureate of united Italy, the Dante of the modern era. Solomos, in turn, is as revered in Greece as Foscolo in Italy. The Greek national anthem is composed of some of his stanzas. The innumerable streets named after him (forty-six in the greater Athens area alone), the film and television representations of the poet, his depiction on banknotes and stamps, the erection of public statues, and the ubiquity of his name in school curricula all clearly attest to Solomos's consecration as a national poet. So deeply embedded are these figures in the national imaginaries of Italy and Greece that one loses sight of the fact that they were born on the same tiny island within just a few years of each other. How and why, in such a narrow span of time, these two men followed such different paths as regards cultural and political belonging and national consciousness, and what this tells us about the world in which they lived, are questions that I try to briefly explore below.[3]

Ugo Foscolo: A Life of Stammering in Exile

Ugo Foscolo was born, not as "Ugo" but as "Nicolaos" (or Niccolò), in 1778. Zante, the place of his birth, part of the seven Ionian Islands, in the southeastern corner of the Adriatic Sea, belonged for almost four centuries to the Venetian Republic. In the "intimate" world of the Venetian Adriatic, with all its political and economic unity, interconnectivity, and shared experience, there was still leeway for a large degree of autonomy at the local level.[4] The Ionian aristocracy, in whose hands in practice most political and judicial power lay, despite being predominantly Orthodox Christian, conducted its

3 This is a greatly abbreviated version of two chapters of my book *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800–1850: Stammering the Nation* (2018).

4 The Adriatic has been labelled a "sea of intimacy" by Predrag Matvejević (1999: 14). See also Arbel 2013.

official business in the Venetian dialect, which was also the empire's language of trade, law, education, and high culture. Routine, day-to-day affairs were transacted in the local Greek language, the dialect of the peasantry, and the lower echelons of society. Rather than being ethnic, the frontier between languages in this diglossic environment was social. The local Greek used in Zante, just one among the various Greek dialects spoken then across the Ottoman and Venetian worlds, was, of course, colloquial and non-standardized. But such was also the Italian spoken by the Zakynthian bilingual aristocracy: the so-called *dialetto corcirese* (originating in Corfu, but used nearly everywhere on the Ionian Islands) consisted of an odd mixture that included archaic Venetian words, no longer featuring in the metropolitan language, and certain Greek syntactical features (Ikonomou 2010; Banfi 2011).

On Zante, as on all the other Ionian Islands, there were no schools or universities, libraries or printing presses. It was only with the arrival of the French Jacobins – who, in 1797, had seized control of Venice and what was left of its maritime empire – that the first publishing house was established on Corfu (1798), while Zante acquired its own only in 1810, under the military occupation of the British. Children in the Ionian Islands were taught the rudiments of Italian, Greek, Latin, and arithmetic by private tutors, most often Catholic or Orthodox priests (Pieri 1850, I: 19; Pecchio 1851: 9–10). In exchange, Venice offered access – at any rate to those who could afford it – to the illustrious universities of the metropole and of the Italian hinterland, namely in Padua, Pavia, and Bologna.

In terms of literary production, the record of the Ionian Islands was hardly illustrious. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century, when education started spreading to wider sectors of society, that the first signs of any literary activity appeared on the islands. This activity was undertaken, of course, in Italian. It was through their studies in Italy and their readings of Italian books that a generation of Ionian aristocrats discovered, toward the end of the eighteenth century, their poetic predilections and their inclination toward Greek antiquity. This is probably the reason they never appear in surveys of modern Greek literature. Completely immersed in the universe of Venetian and more widely Italian letters as these figures were, they nevertheless had, like everyone on the Ionian Islands, a vague sense of being "Greek," of obscurely belonging to the wider Greek space. This sense of "Greekness" was prompted not only by the language of the Orthodox Church but also by the islands' ancient ruins, their geographical proximity to the Greek mainland and, of course, by the spoken idiom of the peasantry and its folktales and popular songs (Arvanitakis 2007). Yet the language of poetry could not help

but be Italian. Against the rich landscape of the Italian literature of the *Settecento* and early *Ottocento*, with its many academies and journals and with an established poetic tradition that went back to the great Italian writers of the *Trecento* and the *Quattrocento*, Greek literature had as yet almost nothing to offer in terms of poetic models. Apart from the seventeenth-century Cretan dialectal narrative poetry (notably the romance *Erotokritos*, published somewhat later, in 1713, and itself influenced by Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*) and the klephtic songs of the area of Epirus facing the Ionian Islands, the rest of the cultural production in Greek – what is sometimes known as the "Neohellenic Enlightenment" of the eighteenth century – concerned philosophical and scientific prose and works of educational proselytisation, which had nothing to do with literature as such (Kitromilides 2013). One could counter that toward the end of the century some Phanariots (a Christian elite that managed to acquire wealth and leading positions in the Ottoman empire) in the salons of Constantinople, like Athanasios Christopoulos, started composing Arcadian verses in Greek, while in Vienna the revolutionary Rigas Velestinlis published a Greek translation of Metastasio's *Olimpiade* (1797) and composed his *Thourios* (a patriotic battle-hymn), which in 1798 would be printed in Corfu and be sung wherever Greek was spoken. But these stimuli were either too distant or too weak or too much overshadowed by the grandeur of Italian literature to attract the attention of the literati of a Venetian province.

This, then, was the literary and linguistic landscape of Foscolo's time. Born to a Greek Orthodox Zakynthian mother and a Venetian Catholic father from an impoverished family which had been living for several generations on the eastern fringes of the empire, Foscolo seemed to epitomize by birth the interconnected universe situated between the two shores of the Venetian Adriatic. As a child of a mixed marriage, he embraced the religion of his father and, despite the insistent demands of his Orthodox relatives, he was never re-baptized into Orthodoxy (as was then the usual practice for children of mixed marriages on the Ionian Islands). When he was seven his family moved to Spalato, in Dalmatia (present-day Split, in Croatia), while some years later, when he was fifteen, his family relocated to Venice.

The first years in Venice, his "adopted patria" as he used to call it, were very difficult for the young Nicolaos. When Foscolo arrived in Italy he could speak only the Zakynthian Greek dialect and, probably, a broken Venetian idiom (the *dialetto corcirese*), inherited by his father's family. Of course, he was taught some elementary Italian during his short stay in Spalato. As he would write some time later, "Young as I am, born in Greece, educated among

Dalmatians, I have been stammering for only four years in Italy."[5] The "stammering" metaphor was dear to him and he would use it often. For example, in a letter of those days to Melchiorre Cesarotti, who was soon to become his guide in the world of poetry, Foscolo would say: "I shall hear from you the precepts of a language that I studied with great difficulty, and for the moment I only stammer." The phrase is much more telling in the original because written in a hybrid Italo-Greek: "udrò da voi i precetti di una lingua che con gran fatica ho studiato, e che al presente τραυλίζω." It is interesting also that it is, in fact, the word *stammer* that is conveyed in Greek, exemplifying the very point the young man is concerned to make.[6]

However difficult they were, these early years in Venice were also formative. Under the guidance of his Venetian teachers, the provincial boy gradually discovered his literary and cultural universe: Latin and ancient Greek writers (mainly Homer), the French Enlightenment, Christian texts, European literature (notably Shakespeare, Goethe, Ossian, Thomas Gray, Edward Young – all in Italian translation), and Italian classics (namely Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Vittorio Alfieri, Giuseppe Parini, and Vincenzo Monti). His solid training in Italian letters started to bear fruit and he began to compose his own verses, which he sent out to friends and to literary journals, signing them now with his new and *more Italian* name, "Ugo."[7] In 1797, at only eighteen years of age, he wrote *Tieste* (Thyestes), a neoclassical tragedy inspired by the style and themes of Alfieri, which met with great success on the Venetian stage. Tragedy writing was considered to be the most sublime form of composition, while *Alfierismo*, the love of all things linked to the Piedmontese dramatist and poet Vittorio Alfieri (1749–1803) and to his anti-tyrannical and libertarian stance, was in vogue; and young Foscolo seemed to be adept at both (Nicoletti 1989).

But in Venice, the young Zakynthian did not only discover poetry; he also discovered politics. These were the days when Napoleon crossed the Alps, bringing to the Italian peninsula the principles of the French Revolution and

5 Introduction to the ode *A Bonaparte Liberatore* (1797). In Foscolo 1961: 331.

6 Foscolo 1949–94, I: 20. On the "stammering" metaphor, see also Terzoli 2000: 169–70. Foscolo's correspondence contains a number of Greco-Italian hybridisms. For example, "cai egò se agapao poli, sebbene voi den me agapas ti potes" ("and I love you very much, even if you do not love me at all") is a phrase taken from a letter of the same period to Isabella Teotochi-Albrizzi, which mixes Italian words with Greek Zakynthian dialect features (written in Latin characters), thus displaying the curious linguistic and cultural universe of the two correspondents. In Foscolo 1961: 132.

7 In private letters, especially to members of his own family, he continued to use his original name, or sometimes even both names: "Ugo, cioè Niccolò" ("Ugo, that is Nicolaos"). [Ntinos Konomos] 1949: 222.

delivering the final blow to the already crumbling Venetian Republic. By the time the *Serenissima* collapsed, Foscolo had become a convinced Jacobin. Involved as he was in the republican patriotic circles of the capital, he welcomed with enthusiasm the provisional Venetian Democratic Municipality which replaced the Doge's aristocratic *Gran Consiglio* after the latter's abdication in May 1797. Hoping that Napoleon would help the Venetian nation to restore its venerable traditions of republican liberty, Foscolo participated in the Patriotic Association of Public Instruction, which was founded in those days with a view to fostering the values of freedom and equality (Tabet 2004). These were stirring times not only for Venice but for the whole of the Italian peninsula and the Adriatic. As Napoleon's army marched back and forth through the Italian states and the ex-Venetian provinces, the wind of revolution blew everywhere. Foscolo enlisted as a volunteer in the republican army encamped before Bologna, while at the same time he penned patriotic poems, including a famous ode to *Bonaparte Liberatore*. The creation of the French-protected "Jacobin" republics in central and northern Italy (the Cispadane Republic, and later the Cisalpine Republic), along with Napoleon's promises that he would secure Italian independence, raised hopes among patriots and intellectuals alike that the Italian peninsula (or at least part of it) would be transformed into a nation on the model of revolutionary France (De Francesco 2011). Foscolo shared these hopes: "[I may have been born in Greece]" – the young Zakynthian confessed in his introduction to the ode to *Bonaparte Liberatore* – "[but] the lofty genius of Liberty that inflames me and renders me a Free Man and Citizen of a Fatherland not touched by chance but chosen, gives me the rights of an Italian" (in Foscolo 1961: 331). The hopes of the Venetian patriots were, however, soon to be dashed, when news arrived of the Treaty of Campo Formio (October 1797), a settlement between France and Austria which handed Veneto over to the Habsburg empire. Devastated by this turn of events, Foscolo, like several other liberal patriots, retreated to Milan, the then capital of the Cisalpine Republic and the sole remaining stronghold of those who still envisioned a nationwide political emancipation. In Milan and in other parts of the "liberated" Italian territories, where he stayed during the revolutionary and Napoleonic years, Foscolo developed a cultural program for the Italian democratic nation, engaging in military and journalistic activity and becoming, along with the celebrated Milanese poet Vincenzo Monti, the first genuinely "Italian intellectual" (Pertici 2002: 314–15). In addition, the young Zakynthian applied for "Italian citizenship," to which, because he was recognized as a Venetian refugee from the circumstances created by the Treaty of Campo Formio, he was judged eligible. It was in this context, then, that

Foscolo's cultural identity turned political, and "*quel grecotto*" (that little Greek guy) – as a Venetian police report read – became Italian (Del Vento 2003: 69, 70–73). He not only became Italian; he became at once Italian and a refugee.

Nationality, indeed, came for Foscolo together with exile. And this is the way that he perceived and expressed it in the work that did the most to ensure him a place in the Italian pantheon of letters. I refer here to his best-seller *Le ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis), undoubtedly the most popular novel of the Italian Risorgimento, which Foscolo first published in 1798 and then redrafted and republished several times, updating it according to historical developments in the period up until 1817. *Ortis* was an epistolary novel, written on the model of Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). It recounts the adventures and travails of Jacopo, a young man forced into exile by a double disenchantment: the loss of his patria, Venice, which is occupied by the Austrians, and the loss of his beloved, Teresa, who is destined by her father to marry a marquis, a man far richer than Jacopo. This mixture of "unhappy love" (*amore infelice*), at once political and romantic, engenders sentiments of great distress and disquiet for the protagonist who decides, by the end of the novel, to commit suicide. This seemingly simple formula enabled Foscolo to do, in reality, something extremely elaborate. First, he managed to combine the themes of romantic love and love for the patria in a unique ensemble, which made his novel easily digestible and, thus, immensely popular. Second, he forged one of the most powerful myths of the Italian Risorgimento, the "myth of exile." His novel belonged, in actual fact, to a venerable tradition within Italian letters dealing with this same theme. The "myth of exile" consisted in the almost paradoxical idea – present in, among others, Dante and Alfieri – according to which, in certain political circumstances, men can preserve their patriotism only by abandoning their patria. What Foscolo did was to take this essentially republican idea and to make it national. He married this theme with the national preoccupations of his time, suggesting that wherever people cannot freely express their national spirit, they have no real homeland. This results in men, even those who never leave home, feeling as if they were in eternal exile (Isabella 2006). The protagonist of his novel personifies, in fact, the perpetual and desperate sense of loss and homelessness (*a-patria*): "exiled, poor, unknown to all mankind," "I fail to find a homeland as I look inside myself" are phrases uttered again and again by Jacopo Ortis (Foscolo 2002: 77, 111 respectively).

What made Foscolo's novel even more appealing was the fact that there was a strong autobiographical element in it. Not only did Foscolo invent

Ortis, he also *became* him. In order to express the hopes and fears of an entire generation of disillusioned Italian patriots, he literally chose the road of exile himself: after years of disappointment and wandering during the Napoleonic Wars through various cities of Italy and France, in 1815, when the Austrians occupied what remained of the kingdom of northern Italy, he refused to swear allegiance to the occupying power and decided to leave, vowing never to return. After one year of hiding in Switzerland (where he used, among others, the assumed name "Jacopo Ortis"), he settled in London, where he lived out the remaining ten years of his life. Only three years before his death, in 1824, the now celebrated Italian poet addressed a letter to a member of the Greek revolutionary government (the sole revolution not to have been crushed by the reactionary post-Napoleonic powers) – written entirely in his own peculiar, idiomatic Greek – where he claimed that he wanted to go and live amongst his Greek "fellow-citizens" and even give his life in the struggle for the liberation of the country, on condition that the authorities recognized him as a citizen and offered him employment (Foscolo 1994: 381–83). Nobody knows what happened to Foscolo's application to become Greek. It was probably lost somewhere among the warring factions of the Greek revolutionary war. Be that as it may, it stands as a testimony of what had become by now Foscolo's emblematic and almost fictional life of desperate transnational patriotisms and never-ending exiles: "What then of the patria? . . . Heaven has not granted me one, indeed, it instructed fortune to cast me into the world like a dice" – reads one of his notes.[8]

Dionysios Solomos: A Life in Translation[9]

Let us now turn to Dionysios Solomos – who was not actually born as "Dionysios Solomos," but as "Dionisio Salamon." We are now in 1798 and in a world that differed profoundly from the one into which Foscolo had been born twenty years before. The *Serenissima* was already a thing of the past, and people in Zante were celebrating Napoleon's triumphs in the Adriatic and the radical break with their old world. Of course, some things could not change so easily. Venice had left its enduring legacies to the islands, especially as regards language, law, and education. Old cultural geographies persisted as well-to-do families continued to send their sons to Italy for their studies and Italian continued to be the dominant language of culture. Despite consecutive declarations in the constitutions that regulated the political status of the

8 From his unpublished work *Il sesto tomo dell'io* (The sixth volume of I), a fragmentary pseudo-autobiography that he drafted in 1799–1800. Foscolo 1991: 19.

9 I borrow the definition from Isabelle de Courtivron (2003).

Ionian Islands every time they passed to a new ruler in the immediate post-Venetian period (the French in 1798, the Russians in 1800, the French again in 1807, and the British in 1815), the law proclaiming Greek to be the official language of the state was applied fully only in the second half of the century (Mackridge 2014).

Dionisio was the son of an elderly Greek Zakynthian count and a much younger plebeian woman who had served as the countess's maid before becoming the count's wife. When he was nine his father died and the boy was placed in the care of his private tutor, an exile from Cremona, in northern Italy, who in 1808 returned to his own country and was instructed to take Dionisio with him. So young Salamon went to school at Venice and Cremona and took up higher studies at the University of Pavia. During the same period, he started shyly to compose his first verses in Latin and Italian, which were assigned to him as educational exercises by his teachers, who professed astonishment at their brilliance. Upon his graduation in 1818, Salamon went back to the Ionian Islands, where he would stay until the end of his life. He was soon incorporated into a circle of Zakynthian intellectuals who passed whole afternoons improvising poetry in Italian. One fruit of these gatherings was the only book of his poems ever printed during his lifetime, *Rime Improvvisate*, a collection of Italian-language sonnets supposedly sent to press by his friend Lodovico Strani (1822). The collection was preceded by a letter of dedication to Ugo Foscolo, where the author (allegedly Strani) urged the famous Zakynthian to encourage Salamon "to spare no pains in studying ancient Greek in order to draw from it greater riches of language, so that by so doing, by writing the mother tongue, he will be more ours than you yourself are." At the same time, he asked the celebrated poet to excuse the young Zakynthian for still writing poetry in Italian and explained that while he did that "in order to please his circle of friends," in the meantime he "devotes himself to forming the modern Greek Language" (Solomos 1822: Preface).

In fact, from his return to Zante onwards, Salamon tried now and then to write poems in Greek. It appears, however, that it was only in 1823 that he consciously decided to become a Greek (and actually a national) poet, repositioning himself so that he was no longer on the eastern fringes of the Italian world but rather on the western fringes of the Greek world. It took him a long time to get this far. This was indeed a very slow process, a gradual transformation which is highlighted in the successive variations of his own name – from the Italian "Dionisio Salamon," to the semi-Hellenized "Dionisio Solomòs" (from 1828 onwards in the letters he wrote in Italian),

to the Greek "Διονύσιος Σολωμός' (Dionysios Solomos), with which he published his Greek works (Mackridge 1994).

There were various reasons for Solomos's decision to reinvent himself as a Greek poet. First and foremost, the outbreak of the Greek revolution (1821) and, especially, the terrible shadow it cast on Zante. Solomos saw the wretched refugees from Missolonghi arriving on the island and felt the earth trembling under his feet from the cannonades of the first siege of the city in 1822. No wonder that he dedicated some of his later Greek masterpieces, such as the *Free Besieged* and the *Woman of Zakynthos*, to that very subject. What is more, when Solomos was in Zante, Byron made a brief visit to the Ionian Islands – by then a semi-colony of Britain – on his way to Greece. There is no evidence that the two met (Byron stayed in Zante for only one day), but certainly the "Byronic icon," so sophisticatedly constructed around the Greek cause, must have been particularly inspiring for the young Zakynthian (Roessel 2002; Beaton 2014). It is not surprising that on the death of the British poet one year later, Solomos composed an *Ode on the Death of Lord Byron* (written out in parallel columns of Greek and Italian), which he sought in vain to publish in London and Paris.

The Greek nation offered a signal opportunity for a career in poetry, as Solomos was quick to realize. The tumultuous experience of the Greek revolution and the waves of European philhellenism occasioned by it had a major impact on his decision to compose the *Hymn to Liberty*, a 158-stanza Greek patriotic and philhellenic poem, written in 1823. The poem – first published between two sieges in Missolonghi in 1824 with an Italian prose translation on the opposite page, and then in 1825 in English and French translations – won Solomos international recognition as a philhellene and Greek poet. Once the Ionian Islands were united to the Kingdom of Greece, in 1864, the first two stanzas of that poem would be set to music and officially proclaimed the national anthem of the country. In reality – save for some poetic fragments published in local Ionian journals – this was the only completed Greek work that Solomos ever published. However, it was enough to establish him as Greece's national poet.[10]

In recent years, scholars have advanced a set of claims about how, in the universe of modern Greek literature, the very concept of the "national poet" was forged through a process of formalization and institutionalization of

10 The French translation of the *Hymn*, by Stanislas Julien, was included (together with the original Greek) in Volume II of Fauriel 1824–25. The English translation, by Charles Brinsley Sheridan, was included in his book *The Songs of Greece from the Romaic Text* (1825).

poetry and of the role of the poet, which took place in the years around the mid-nineteenth century. This phenomenon was, indeed, first precipitated by Solomos's own attitude toward poetry as a conscious patriotic effort and duty (Veloudis 2004: 81ff.; Politis 2012). The consolidation of an image of Solomos as a national poet went hand in hand with the perception that he had inaugurated the field of modern Greek literature. This he did, in essence, by transforming demotic Greek into a language suitable for poetry. One of the most evocative accounts of the poet is to be found in *Forever and a Day* (1998), a late film by Theo Angelopoulos in which Solomos features as a solitary figure who wanders around Zante gathering words from the lips of the island people. Indeed, Solomos's major obstacle to becoming a Greek poet was that, save for the Zakynthian vernacular, he did not know Greek. What is more, there was no established poetic tradition in the Greek language to sustain his choice. So, he had to invent almost everything from scratch. He thought that the best way to do so was by studying the living elements of his country, the natural spoken language of the people. The language of the peasants, he believed, which showed itself at its finest in folk songs, expressed the unmediated substance of the soul of the nation.

Solomos is a remarkably odd choice for "national poet" of Greece. To begin with, he was – and he remained – bicultural and bilingual. His manuscripts are full of sketches in Italian which he then laboriously translated into Greek and, more often than not, left in fragments. His usual working method was to embark upon a first draft of the poem (or a stanza perhaps) in Italian prose, and then to proceed by gradually eliminating the Italian prose and replacing it with more and more Greek verse, although the latter might well be simply a word-for-word rendering of the Italian. The bulk of Solomos's poems are, indeed, Greek fragments embedded within Italian prose drafts. What is more, the margins of these Greek poetic fragments overflow with thoughts and reminders to himself written in Italian, which comment upon the future revision of his Greek work, which is thus always a work in progress. It has been demonstrated, in addition, that even when they were finished, Solomos's Greek verses remained full of Italianisms. It was not by writing *either* in Italian *or* in Greek that Solomos proceeded, scholars say; it was by writing both in Italian *and* in Greek, merging both languages inseparably together. This "promiscuous interpenetration" of the two languages often ended up producing a third, hybrid language composed of elements from both idioms which were used in the same sentence or phrase. The following extract, a mixture of Zakynthian Greek and Venetian-tinged Italian, is a case in point: "Ma zà κάνω ogni sproposito/ Μέρα

νύχτα . . . Μπά! a proposito,/ Vostra madre τί μου κάνει;" (But now I make every kind of gaffe/ all day and all night . . . Ah! by the way, / how is your mother doing?). Sometimes, Italian and Greek elements were merged in the same word (i.e., "Grεκιας," "τρεmavano") or produced totally new hybrid words (e.g., "ντισερτατσιόνες" [dissertations]).[11] Indeed, most scholars describe Solomos's march toward Greek culture as a tormented and conscious transition from one language to another, as a "tyrannical" passage which felt as if it were doomed to remain incomplete.

Not only did Italian remain as the interlanguage of Solomos's Greek poetry, but it became the main – and even exclusive – language of his poetry again at the end of his life. While at the beginning of the 1850s Greek was being applied as the official language in every sphere of Ionian public life, Solomos, now in his mid-fifties, turned to writing Italian poems again. What is more, from approximately 1854 onwards he completely abandoned Greek as a language of poetic composition. This ostensibly surprising turn of events has been characterized as a "regression," as Solomos's return to his initial, more natural and easier poetic language. Greek was not, after all, the language of his "unprocessed" self. A creator of Greek language, Solomos had always nevertheless stood outside it, moving on the fringes of both linguistic universes.

Sparks of a Mediterranean Multinational Literature

Another in-between figure and frontier intellectual was Niccolò Tommaseo (1802–74). Born in Dalmatia ("in a country midway between Greece and Italy," in his own words) (Tommaseo [1855] 2008a: 742) when this area had just passed from Venetian into Napoleonic and then into Austrian hands, he studied in Italy and lived there, between Venice, Florence, and Turin, for the greater part of his life. A prolific author, lexicographer, journalist, and political activist, Tommaseo was perhaps the nineteenth-century Adriatic's most famous son. One of the most influential voices of the Italian Risorgimento (and, notably, the second-in-command in the 1848–49 Venetian revolution), he was compelled to spend several years in exile – in Paris and Corsica during the 1830s and in Corfu one decade later. But exile was, for Tommaseo, something more than simply an experience he had to pass through. It was the lens through which he narrated his whole existence as a national and cultural "in-betweener" (Tatti 2004). During the 1840s, he became the

11 The extract is from Mackridge 1994: 68. On this see also Dallas 1997; Lambropoulos 1988: 66–99; Rotolo 1988; Calotychos 2003: 73–87; Van Dyck 2009.

unofficial leader of what has aptly been called the "Adriatic multi-national movement," a political program championing a vision of nationhood which was unbordered, inclusive, and fraternal (Kirchner Reill 2012). For Tommaseo, "patria" was by no means a straightforward concept. "It is not always easy to define the word *patria*," he once wrote; "love of patria has to be reconciled with love of humanity; and the common faith in the nations, and the unity of the religious association that is formed from it, should prepare the time, still far off, in which the whole of humankind shall feel itself to be one family" (Tommaseo 1862, II: 19–24).

Nowhere can Tommaseo's vision of the world, at the same time fraternal and national, be more clearly discerned than in his book *Scintille* ("Sparks" in Italian), published in 1841. The volume, "a riot," as it has been characterized, "of all possible genres" – consists of a prose narrative that runs across the whole book but is frequently interrupted by poems, translations, passages from Latin and Greek texts, letters written by the author or addressed to him, folk songs, travel accounts, book reviews, and prayers – was meant to be a preface to the anthology of folk ballads from Tuscany, Corsica, Greece, and Illyria, which Tommaseo published in that same year (*Canti Popolari, Toscani, Corsi, Illirici e Greci*) (Contini 1971: 6). Adhering to the principles of Romanticism, Tommaseo believed that folk songs revealed the deeper moral and aesthetic values of a nation. Unlike most Romantics, however, he also believed that folk traditions might reveal the common elements shared between different nations. By putting these four corpuses of songs within one and the same anthology, he was, furthermore, arguing that fraternity among peoples would be reached, not by eliminating national distinctions, but by attaining a deeper understanding of them. In addition, by eliciting each people's connections with, and influences from its neighbors, he sought to show just how intertwined nations really were. In the *Scintille*, he argued that the greatness of a nation is seen in the way it cultivates its bonds with its neighbours: "The true greatness of every nation would seem to me to consist in this, [namely], modestly and resolutely preserving its own nature, while also embracing its sisters with respectful affection" (Tommaseo 1841: 7).

But this work is remarkable not only for its multinational ideology. Equally important are, first, its fragmentary nature – "In one man there are several men: which is as much as to say that man is a fragment by himself," Tommaseo characteristically wrote – and, second, its plurilingualism (1841: 130). In its original form, *Scintille* was written variously in Italian, French, South Slavic, and Greek, the aim being to show the world that diversity in

language and culture did not constitute an obstacle but should rather provide impetus for the sisterhood of Mediterranean nations. Nevertheless, the Austrian censorship in Venice and Dalmatia obliged Tommaseo to excise most of the sections concerning the Illyrian (Slavic) material. The censored part was published, however, in a separate volume in Zagreb in 1844. This volume, titled now *Iskrice* ("Sparks" in Serbo-Croatian) and authored under the name Nikole Tommasea, presents a particular interest in its own right. Written originally in Tommaseo's Dalmatian South Slavic dialect, in a time before the standardization of the Croat and Serbian languages, the book depicted the Slavic peoples, and especially a romanticized peasant version of them, as one big family. Dedicated to "all the Yugoslav peoples" (a term chosen by the publisher in order to stand in for the forbidden "Illyrian" – a reference to the South Slavs), the volume expressed Tommaseo's hopes of transforming the region's diversity from a negative into a positive force: "Orthodox and Catholics . . . Let us love one another and all of these troubles will disperse like the fog," he wrote, addressing his fellow Dalmatians in times of religious and cultural conflict (Tommaseo 2008b: 446; Ivetić 2004, 2008). It was indeed Tommaseo's firm conviction that no one nation was superior to any other and that each should develop by helping, supporting, and respecting the others. He would live long enough to see his vision utterly defeated by a version of nationalism which was exclusionary, divisive and, at times, sanguinary and aggressive. Ironically enough, this development would be mirrored in the afterlives of his book. The *Iskrice* were posthumously published in Zagreb in 1888, using an earlier, "corrected" version of Tommaseo's language, rendered in the now standardized Croat and replacing the term "Yugoslav" with "Croat." A second edition followed in 1898 in Belgrade, which made the "correction" by translating the text into the now standardized Serbian – written in the Cyrillic alphabet – and by replacing "Yugoslav" with "Serbian" (Ivetić 2014: 13–15). From now on, Tommaseo would be read as *either* an Italian, *or* a Croat *or* a Serbian author; but, certainly, not as he would have wanted it: all of them together.

Conclusion

These micro-histories tell us something about the macro-historical processes unfolding in the Mediterranean, and specifically in the Adriatic Sea, in the long nineteenth century. These processes involved the transition from the old Venetian empire to the new empires which by turns appeared and disappeared from the region (the Napoleonic, the Austrian, the Russian, the Ottoman, the British), as well as to the emerging nationalisms and the resulting nation-states

(among others, Italian, Greek, Croat, and Serbian). This transition did not only signify the slow and uneven passage from empire to nation-state. It also marked the radical transformation of the concept of "patria," from a cultural and local community into a political and national entity. It meant the gradual reconceptualization of language that was transformed from an index of social mobility into an attribute of national identity, as well as of poetry, the latter being now reconfigured as committed and national. What is more, this transition amounted to the dissolution of the common Adriatic space and to the shattering of its Venetian cultural continuum. It meant a shift in political and cultural geographies – in the case of the Ionians and the Dalmatians, loyalties shifted from the center that Venice used to be to the centers that Athens, Zagreb, and Belgrade were now becoming. Overall, these processes led to the total restructuring of space and to the tracing of new boundaries between homelands and languages.

Narrating the lives of these authors and texts by placing them against their Mediterranean historical background allows the scholar to tell a markedly different story about the way national literatures and histories were founded. By reading the history of the period through the lens of a shifting maritime region, from the "in-between" space of the Adriatic Sea and through the lives of these frontier and itinerant intellectuals and their texts, I have, I trust, managed to instill some doubts as to what "Italian," "Greek," "Croat," or "Serbian" really mean, and to question some of the teleologies of the national literary canons. So tenacious is the nation, with its ideal presumptions about the homogeneity of language, ethnicity, culture, and religion, that we risk losing sight of forms of literary and intellectual transnationalism that do not fit neatly into its distinctions (Lennon 2010). In our monolingual and frequently teleological world, it is indeed difficult to imagine just how ethnically and linguistically plural the nation was in its initial stages of life. It is this cemetery of lost ideas, these forgotten realities and possibilities obscured by what was to come, that the Mediterranean, a non-national and non-teleological category of historical and literary analysis, helps to recover.

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25

Antipodal Turns: Antipodean Americas and the Hemispheric Shift

PAUL GILES

The Rhetoric of Transposition

The antipodal introduces a new twist to understandings of postcolonialism and world literature, since the term has long functioned as a figurative rather than merely a geographical conceit. Antipodal dimensions involve more than simply an oppositional stance toward existing power relations; more subversively, they also introduce a twisting or transposition of conventional cultural categories. Much of the impetus behind the delineation of "new cartographies" in the world of literary criticism has derived from a challenge to what Bruce Robbins described as "an outmoded core-periphery geography" (2016: n.p.), a traditional form of spatial hierarchy that tended to valorize traditional centers (Europe, North America) while implicitly keeping other continents (Africa, Asia) in their subordinate place. Various arcs of postcolonial criticism, from Edward Said onward, traced ways in which oblique geographical intersections served to compromise the notion of any part of the world being circumscribed or set apart, as Said famously demonstrated in his analysis of how financial involvement in the slave plantations of Antigua effectively upheld the cultural economy of the English gentry in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. Since then, many varieties of cartographic remapping have also uncovered in illuminating ways the anglophone bias permeating Western scholarship. For example, Shu-Mei Shih's emphasis on "geopolitical situatedness, a place-based practice" (2011: 717) has in her case demonstrated ways in which Chinese continental colonialism operated as a rival enterprise to Western imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Yet Shih's insistence on the "Sinophone" as "method and theory" (717) introduces its own complications, questions tied to the general complicity of cartographic criticism with discrete scientific coordinates and, by extension,

the assumed centrality of an imperial subject bound to impositions of regular order. For Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, any map-making theorist of world literature always risks assuming a viewpoint that can be construed as too Olympian, thereby overlooking the more specific characteristics associated with particular locations or diverse cultural formations (Cooppan 2015: 8). Such critiques of epistemological detachment and assumed neutrality have long been in evidence in relation to debates around the words *antipodal* and *antipodean*. This idea was used in classical antiquity to describe hypothetically the other side of the sphere, and its first citation in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is taken from John Trevisa's 1398 translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (On the Properties of Things, 1240), where, in Trevisa's rendition, the Paris scholastic describes Ethiopians as "antipodes, men that have their feet against our feet." By the nineteenth century, this term had become commonplace as a way of referring to Australia and New Zealand in a faintly derogatory manner, where their geographical location on the other side of the planet was understood as a correlative both to British dominion and also to the vast distances separating these settlements from traditional centers of political and cultural power.[1] Hence, for example, in his 1840 essay "The Hero as Poet" Thomas Carlyle envisaged how "England, before long, this island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English: in America, in New Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the globe" (1969: 113). Carlyle's notion here of "the very Antipodes" implies its own sense of spatial hierarchy, and Australian critic Ross Gibson complained in 1992 of "antique European clichés about the anarchic antipodes" (1992: 23), pointing out how such notions of an inverted space depended for their provenance upon Eurocentric versions of a naturalized world order, with Europe itself at the center.

There are many reasons why such a conception of the globe should now seem superannuated. Speaking in 2011 in Australia, Adam Garfinkle, a former speechwriter for both of George W. Bush's Secretaries of State, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, said that the twenty-first century will mark the first time in 400 years that the globe has had a "normative environment," as he put it, that is "non-Western." According to projections by the World Bank, the United States will by 2050 have only the world's third largest economy in terms of GNP, with America's 34 trillion being dwarfed by India's 44 trillion and, even more, by China's 58 trillion, by which time China's rate of

1 On this theme, see McMullan, Gordan, and Mead 2018: 12.

economic growth will be seven times larger than that of the United States. Working on the geographical premise that the antipode of any place on Earth is positioned diametrically opposite to it, where a line drawn from one to the other passes through the center of the Earth and forms a true diameter, we would reckon China to be in an exact antipodal relation to South America; but from a more figurative standpoint the ramifications of this antipodal turn extend across an East/West axis to the relative positions of America and Asia more generally. In 2050, according to the World Bank's prediction, the fourth largest economy in the world will be that of Indonesia, an archipelago in the Southern Hemisphere far distant from the charmed circles of London, Paris, or Brussels, and the emergence of Indonesia would add a South/North antipodal turn to the existing East/West dynamic, further disrupting Western hegemonic assumptions emanating from Europe and North America. The idea of antipodean geography has typically involved a proleptic condition, where the Southern Hemisphere would rise as the Northern Hemisphere fell, and such an emphasis on transposition and exchange has long been an integral part of antipodal mythologies, extending back into the nineteenth century and earlier. In 1840, for example, Thomas Babington Macaulay foresaw how a "traveller from New Zealander shall, in the midst of vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Pauls's" (1840: 258). This vision of the eventual supersession of London by New Zealand, partly intimidating but also partly alluring, came to enjoy great resonance in mid-Victorian Britain, and it anticipated the subsequent intercalation of the antipodal with elements of fantasy or science fiction, through which the shape of the world would appear disconcertingly contorted.

Working within a similar model of prognostication, American philosopher Josiah Royce, a friend and colleague of William James at Harvard, concluded his "Reflections after a Wandering Life in Australia" by invoking "the great future empire of the southern hemisphere" (1889: 816), predicting that "Australia, when she grows a great nation, is to be the first civilized power of the Pacific" (825). Royce's understanding of future Australian greatness was predicated in part upon a conventional Victorian form of racism, by which he denigrated "the Orientals" (826), particularly the Chinese, while saluting Australians for consolidating "the English heritage that is common to us all" (681). Yet the charm of Australia for Royce lay precisely in the way this "second New World" (676) created in his eyes an environment that was a mixture of the "weird" and the "natural" (678), a place where familiar constellations appeared "half inverted in the Australian sky" (677). Such

partial inversions enabled Royce to position Australia as a disorienting combination of similarity and difference: "One's prejudice," he reported of the traveler in Australia, "leads him to expect it to be something singular, altered, remote, in short antipodean . . . It is nothing of the kind, but on the contrary is most disappointingly human and delightful" (676). At the same time, this Australian landscape appeared for him as "startling, dream-like – a rebellion against the conventional forms of beauty in nature" (678). It is precisely within this kind of dialectic between normative and the deviant that Royce's understanding of the antipodean condition emerges.

There are many instances of celebrated American literary figures in the nineteenth century drawing on the perspectival reversals characteristic of antipodean geography for creative purposes. Mark Twain, who visited Australia and New Zealand in 1895 and 1896 during the world tour that he subsequently described in *Following the Equator* ([1897] 1996), incorporated multiple maps into his chapter on Australia, so as to compare the relative sizes of Australia and the United States. He also commented in his notebooks on the vast discrepancies between how Australasia appeared in an atlas and the continent in its physical reality: "Glancing at the maps," he observed ruefully in an interview with a Tasmanian newspaper, "I had an idea that there was probably a small ferry boat running eighteen or twenty times a day between Melbourne and New Zealand" (Scharnhorst 2006: 245). Twain's burlesque comedy is, thus, dependent in part on an acknowledgment of divergences between theory and fact, abstract ideation and its embodied correlative, and he exploits this antipodean landscape as an intellectual analogue to such categorical dualisms. He also notes in *Following the Equator* how the system of indentured labor in Queensland, based around the coerced recruitment of Pacific Islanders to work on sugar plantations, was uncomfortably reminiscent of American slavery in the antebellum South. This further implies how Australia represents for Twain a scrambling of time, a transposition of present to past through the disarming, unsettling processes of memory that are represented here as haunting the narrator throughout his world travels.[2]

Herman Melville, who himself served on an Australian whaling ship in 1842, also describes fictional voyages to the South Pacific in *Omoo* (1847) and *Moby-Dick* (1851), with the passage from the Northern to the Southern Hemisphere clearly marked in the latter novel by the way Ishmael envisages "many long night-watches in the remoter waters, and beneath constellations

2 For a further discussion of this point, see Corbould and Emmett 2018.

never seen here at the north" (1982: 73). As Melissa Gniadek has observed, the geographical specificity of *Moby-Dick*, venturing as it does into distant Pacific waters, is often overlooked in an American context, where this fictional narrative is sometimes read as though it were a commentary just on US domestic politics. In fact, *Moby-Dick* involves an encounter with the phenomenology of Oceania, its whales and oceans, that cannot be so readily accommodated within the more familiar "boundaries of the nation" (2015: 316) and its conventional pedagogic formulas. Gniadek's conclusion, that "reading Melville from New Zealand or Japan might look or feel different from reading Melville in the U.S." (317), might seem obvious enough, but it speaks to the stylistic traversals of perspective that are systematically explored in all of Melville's fiction. Like Twain, Melville thus exploited antipodean landscapes (and seascapes) as an analogue to the idiom of transposition and alternation running through his works more generally.

Imagining the "Global South"

Ideas of the Northern Hemisphere enjoying a preordained hegemony over the Southern Hemisphere began to circulate more widely in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, at the very time European explorers were beginning to reach more distant parts of the globe. The English cartographer Richard Blome claimed in 1693 that "Northern" races were "Sanguine, Robust, full of Valour," whereas the "Southern" peoples were "melancholy" on account of being "proximate to the sun," and he developed this into a general principle of subordination, whereby the northern race would always enjoy dominion over its southern counterpart: Turks over Arabians, Romans over Africans, English over the French (Young 2015: 172–73). More recently, cultural critics influenced by postcolonialism have deployed the term "global South" to postulate challenges to neoliberal policies promoted in the North, although often the geographical territories they discuss are not actually located in the Southern Hemisphere. Rob Nixon's version of the "global South" (2011: 4), for example, foregrounds the Middle East, India, and the Caribbean, while Pheng Cheah's *What Is a World?* focuses on "narrative literature from the postcolonial peripheries" such as "the Caribbean, the South Asian subcontinent, Africa, and the Philippines to contest the world created by different flows of global capital" (2016: 12). It is true, of course, that cartographic placement is always a fiction of one kind or another, with geographic location only ever being half the story. Philipp Schorch and Eveline Dürr have identified the key methodological contribution of "transpacific studies" as involving "a relational space"

(2016: xi) through which connections might be made in a circuitous manner, and from this perspective the interactive relations between "north" and "south" become more significant than any specific spatial identity that might be adduced on either side of the equation. Nevertheless, as Robert Dixon has pointed out, it is not helpful when in practice the term "'global South' extends perhaps no further west or south than China" (2015: 8), and Dixon has insisted upon the continuing importance of local knowledge and expertise as a counterpoint to such large-scale abstractions.

While such a corrective is useful, it is also important to align such localized expertise with recognition of how the notion of antipodes has long functioned as a disruptive phenomenon, one found to be disorienting precisely because it did not readily accord with preexisting categories. For example, Tamar Herzog, a scholar of Latin America who has studied the fortunes of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in South America and other parts of the world during the early modern era, pointed out how the *volte-face* brought into play by the Pacific disrupted the efficacy of papal bulls laid down in 1493, shortly after Columbus had returned from his first Atlantic voyage. These papal instruments entrusted the Catholic monarchs of the two Iberian countries to convert native peoples in return for legal rights in territories west of the Azores (for Spain) and east of the Azores (for Portugal). But such a flat map could not countenance the argument that broke out in 1524, when Spain and Portugal failed to agree whether the Moluccas Islands in the Pacific (in present-day Indonesia) should be counted as "east" or "west" of the Azores meridian (Herzog 2015: 17). Traveling around the Earth, of course, it was possible to approach the Moluccas from either an easterly or a westerly direction. Such spherical geography, through which east and west become interchangeable and indeed reversible, exemplifies ways in which an antipodal strain, associated here with the disruptive space of a Pacific Ocean that was just then coming into view for Europeans, turns traditional cartographies on their head. In his *The decades of the newe world of West Indies* (1555), Peter Martyr explicitly acknowledged how Columbus disturbed conventional maps of the world by sailing south as well as west (Young 2015: 25), and this can be seen as a precursor to subsequent planetary formulations where North and South, the proximate and the distant, are brought into a disconcerting alignment.

Ecological and Indigenous Impacts

The growth of ecocriticism in recent times has also helped to underwrite such antipodal reconfigurations, with the insular nature of national

literatures and domestic cultures being exposed to a planetary ecology that recognizes no national boundaries. For example, the Australian-born critic Gillen D'Arcy Wood has described how the biggest volcanic eruption of the millennium in April 1815 on Mount Tambora, located on Sumbawa Island in the East Indies, impacted significantly upon the climate of Western countries between 1815 and 1818. The year 1816 was called the "Year without a Summer" in New England, on the east coast of the United States, while Germans called 1817 the "Year of the Beggar," with the planetary nature of this meteorological phenomenon helping to foster the "apocalyptic" mood in Mary Shelley and other European Romantic writers of this period (Wood 2014: 8–9).

Within environmental criticism more generally, as Timothy Clark has observed, "Australia stands out as a particularly stark exemplar of the challenges of the Anthropocene" (2015: 116), since the country's geographic and psychic disjunctions between city and bush reflect an analogous chasm between different scales of temporality, with the regular chronologies of Western time, dating only from 1788, being set against a much vaster sense of space and time. Mike Smith's work on the archaeology of Australia's deserts has determined that human occupation of this continent goes back 60,000 years, and such a vast expansion of the scale of human history indicates how the Holocene, beginning some 11,700 years ago, might from this archeological perspective be seen as a relatively recent event, how Indigenous peoples survived the Ice Age (extending from 30,000 to 19,000 years ago), and how climate change itself can thus be understood as part of a larger cyclic phenomenon (2013: 341–43).

The enduring presence of Indigenous cultures within this palimpsestic human civilization, where various layers of time are superimposed upon one another, highlights the effects of incongruity that are, according to Mark McGurl, characteristic of "the comedy of scale" (2017: 418) endemic to the very idea of the Anthropocene. As the word itself implies, the Anthropocene is an anthropomorphic concept, locked inextricably within a human prisonhouse of language. Consequently, another aspect of the "eco-logic" associated with this environmental consciousness involves, as Claire Colebrook has written (2012: 195), its "Derridean" (190) deconstruction of human systems of language, an awareness that necessarily evokes "the ongoing myopia of the human species' inability to think its detachment, disconnectedness, malevolence and stupidity in relation to a planet that it continues to imagine as environment, *oikos*, cosmos or *Gaia*" (199). The Anthropocene, in other words, inherently implies its own negation, the disentanglement of its own

mythic status, and in this sense the capacity of an antipodal imagination to overturn conventional constructions speaks appositely to the contradictions incumbent upon "human" attempts to address (and control) "post-human" phenomena (201). By signaling "'our' fragile dependence on an archive and technological formation that might be wiped off the face of the earth" (206), the concept of the Anthropocene consequently invokes the radical incapacity of human systems to subjugate planetary forces. From this vantage point the anomalous cultural and geological situation of Australia, located in an oceanic environment outside the traditional centers of Western cultural and economic production, highlights the structural ironies associated with formulations of the Anthropocene more generally.

There are, of course, other relatively neglected parts of the Earth that have also been brought into focus by the new cartographies that a revived ecological focus has helped to foster. Michelle Burnham has addressed the significance of "a turn toward the oceans" (2016: 153) in American literary studies, while Hester Blum has paid special attention to ways in which Antarctica might be seen as integral rather than marginal to US cultural interests within a planetary framework where environmental issues are a key concern (Blum 2019). Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Stephens have similarly postulated "archipelagic American studies" as a corrective to domestic critiques focused only on the cultural politics of a land-based continentalism (2017). Edouard Glissant's "poetics of relation" in 1990 involved an extrapolation of the Caribbean island geography of the Antilles into what Peter Hallward called a "post-territorial agenda" (2001: 121), whose Deleuzian fluidity implies a broader dissolution of the nation-state's fixed contours, and a similar extrapolation of specific geographic markers into a wider conceptual continuum might be said to characterize the antipodal turn. All of these theoretical approaches are designed to set different parts of the world in dialectical relation to one another, rather than seeing such places as inherently in a fragmented or partitioned state, and in this sense the hemispheric shift can be seen as commensurate with other critical impulses that have sought to realign US and other Western cultural narratives within the contours of planetary space.

One of the more distinguishing aspects of this antipodean dimension, however, is its imbrication within an Indigenous framework that is closely associated with environmentalist concerns but nevertheless propels them in a different cultural direction. The whole issue of Indigenous politics is the most vexed question in the Australasian body politic, in part because it goes way beyond issues of mere legality or social equity to impinge upon

a metaphysical sense of custodianship or belonging. The Mabo High Court judgment handed down in Australia in June 1992, which resulted in the passing of legislation in December 1993, removed the juridical concept of *terra nullius*, which had formed the ideological basis for settler colonial appropriations of a supposedly "vacant" land. However, it did not significantly correct or ameliorate events of the past; it merely served to realign interpretations of history in accordance with the revised political priorities of the present. Since "History is necessity," as Fredric Jameson famously remarked, it "had to happen the way it did" (1984: 178); and no portion of legal rhetoric or political "apology" can alleviate the inexorable racialist logic that sustained the enterprise of Indigenous "extinction" according to nineteenth-century directives. At the same time, the emphasis among Indigenous communities on substantive forms of authenticity carries the potential to compromise specific and material forms of political redress, and it is notable that many critics who have addressed this question in broader intellectual terms have laid emphasis instead on more contingent aspects of Aboriginal identity. Comparing "authorial identity problems in current Australian culture" (2011: 359) to those in "Native American mythology and story-telling" (365), for example, Patrick Brantlinger observed the prevalence of hoaxes among projections of "Aboriginal Dreamtime," concluding that "the postmodern condition" (356) inevitably compromised "demands for authenticity," which "have become a version of discursive oppression" (357–58). Whereas anthologies of Native American poetry were framed retrospectively from the nineteenth century onward, the "supposedly timeless" (368) Aboriginal culture continued to stress "an impossible orality" (364).

In his discussion, Brantlinger cited Elizabeth Povinelli's observation that "no indigenous subject can inhabit the temporal or spatial location to which indigenous identity refers – the geographical and social space and time of authentic Ab-originality" (2002: 367). Rejecting on ontological grounds the whole conception of "an inanimate Animism, the oxymoron of a living landscape frozen in time" (Povinelli 2016: 80), Povinelli sought instead to recalibrate relations between human culture and the nonhuman environment in the light of a system of "geontopower" (172) that would displace Western capital from its more familiar neoliberal imperatives. Describing the demand that Indigenous people couch their analytics of existence "in the form of a cultural belief and obligation to totemic sites" as "absurd" (33), Povinelli argued by contrast that the peculiar quality of the Australian cultural landscape should be seen to lie in its capacity to expose power relations that have become embedded subliminally within the systems of

Western culture: "settler late liberalism is not so much an inverted mirror as a funhouse mirror – distorting rather than reversing lifeworlds" (27). Povinelli thus wrote of "the necessary failure of indigenous identity" (2002: 54) as a discrete entity, since every "determinate content of Aboriginal culture . . . forecloses the imaginary fullness of ancient law" (55), with the displacement of Aboriginal culture into present time marking its "alteration by history" (52). Aboriginal identity, in other words, is inevitably compromised by its incarnation within material history, even though it may take various forms of symbolic capital from a more elusive mythic position within infinitely receding temporal horizons. This makes "contemporary pageants of atonement," such as the "National Sorry Day" of 1998 (43–44), appear merely as emollient symbols of a self-congratulatory cultural diversity, the "fantasy of liberal capitalist society" seeking to accommodate "social difference without social consequences" (16), to change its national symbols but not the inequitable models of economic exploitation that have historically suppressed the Indigenous community. Povinelli's standpoint, in other words, is more pragmatic than metaphysical. Tamar Herzog, in considering the question of Spanish and Portuguese colonization in South America, similarly dismissed the notion of "[h]istorical rights" as "an oxymoron," contending that since "history is the study of change over time," such a conception of "historical rights" might play an important political role in "what some have titled corrective justice . . . but they cannot be part of history" (2015: 266). History in this broader understanding is a neutral framework within which various power struggles take place, and where priorities change as dominant interests rise and fall across time.

To critique the implicit ethnocentrism and quietism of contemporary multicultural agendas is easy enough, of course. In a more challenging way, however, Andrea Smith has argued that the study of native peoples should not be confined simply to particular forms of identity politics but should rather be understood as an intellectual project "that can shape scholarly discourse as a whole" (2010: 43). According to Smith, Native studies has the capacity "to contribute to queer studies by unsettling settler colonialism" (42), through problematizing the kind of normalizing logic that would distinguish nativism from settler colonialism, a strategy that would serve to interrogate "the presumed heteronormativity of national belonging" (63). Rather than regarding settler colonialism as an unusual or aberrant practice, Native studies operating within a wider framework would compel readers and scholars to recognize how the assumptions of settler colonialism have permeated mainstream white culture more generally. There is a clear analogy

here with ways in which, under the influence of Toni Morrison, Rey Chow, and others, African American studies and ethnic studies have recalibrated the broader trajectories of American literary studies. Rather than compartmentalizing Black American writing as a minority interest, Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* examined how the texts of Twain, Hemingway, and other canonical American figures are haunted by specters of race. Morrison's influential expansion of racialist logics to the American literary canon more generally might thus be understood as a structural parallel to an antipodean critical matrix, which similarly seeks to bring formations long kept apart into productive juxtaposition. Just as Smith argues that Native cultures create "a place where the present, past, and future become co-present" (2010: 50), so antipodean scales, through their conjunction of radically divergent spatiotemporal frameworks and their disruption of a linear sequence of cause and effect, can work substantively to reorganize the temporal and spatial patterns of Western culture across a more extensive course. In its reformulation of Western civilization according to planetary parameters, and in its ascription of settler colonialism to Western social dynamics more generally, this antipodal turn offers the prospect of turning relations between white settler and Indigenous cultures, or between human and nonhuman environments, on their head.

All of this speaks to the intellectual advantages of understanding settler colonialism through a comparative lens, something that Anna Brickhouse also saw as a strategy for "unsettling" the more monolithic category of "world literature." Pointing out how the term "settler colonial history" originated as far back as the sixteenth century, at the time when English Protestants were colonizing Ireland, Brickhouse suggested that to reread world literature "through the lens of settler colonial theory" (2016: 1369) allowed the opportunity to conceive of relations between dominant and subjugated cultures in a more historically precise fashion. She also argued that narrower North American views of World Literature might undergo a productive "unsettling" (1369) by the invocation of an "alternative spatiotemporality" associated with "the incommensurability of the multiple worlds across which literature is transmitted" (1368), an incommensurability highlighted by the *longue durée* of settler colonialism and also its more amorphous qualities, its typical manifestation not as a specific event but as "a structure across time" (1369).

This is not, of course, to eviscerate the particular political controversies associated with Indigenous cultures. Patrick Wolfe, whose book *Traces of History* correlates settler colonial policies across Australia, the United States, Brazil, Angola, and Israel, argued cogently that the "goal of settler dominion"

formed a constituent part of "imperialism's global interconnectedness" (2016: 26), a rationale driven by a racial logic whose "overriding goal is White Supremacy" (16). Nevertheless, such a comparative dimension would serve to demystify the apparatus of Indigenous culture, locating it analytically not in relation to a self-authenticating metaphysical nostalgia but within the framework of a global cultural politics. In this sense, the disruptive aspects of an antipodal turn would effectively resist comparativism's old nostalgia for "synthesis or broad-based mastery," as Brickhouse put it (2016: 1369), raising instead the prospect of narrative contexts illuminated by various forms of conceptual juxtaposition, a discursive field within which integrated or systematic knowledge is of less relevance than provocative proximity. An "Indigenous international" might thus be understood as a constituent aspect of a new transpacific studies, with this antipodean shift consequently opening the possibility of reconceiving Indigeneity not just as a local but as a global phenomenon, one that through its multiple forms of layering carries implications for the organization of society across a planetary sphere.[3]

The Polymorphous Antipodean

There are many instances of writers of antipodean heritage being overlooked, or at least marginalized, within the normative trajectories of American literary history. The poet Lola Ridge, who was born in Ireland and brought up in New Zealand before moving to New York in 1908, has remained a minor figure within critical narratives of US modernism, despite being closely involved with its textual production and politics through her editorial work on the Greenwich Village magazine *Broom*, while the antipodean dimensions informing her radical poetry have been overlooked almost entirely. Christina Stead, who moved from Australia to Europe in 1928 and thence to New York in 1937, is another important writer – Saul Bellow recommended her for the Nobel Prize – whose reputation has been clouded by her antipodean associations. Stead's disaffiliation from American domestic norms manifested itself not only in her Marxist sympathies, which were anathema to most American liberal critics during the Cold War era, but also in her transnational elusiveness, her intellectual proclivity never quite to accommodate herself to any given national domain. Her most famous novel, *The Man Who Loved Children* (1940), superimposes its narrative of family life in

3 On the political significance of an "Indigenous International," see McCarthy 2016: 29. See, for example, Fukuyama 1992.

Baltimore on memories of the author's own Sydney childhood, with the book's fractious power emerging in part through a structural double helix, the way it uses a framework of alienation to distance itself from main character Sam Pollit's creed of liberal universalism, his benign belief in "a world fellowship" (1966: 49) and "the United States of Mankind" (213).

In a more fundamental sense, however, the antipodean introduces a polymorphous dimension that disrupts simpler forms of binary opposition, evoking "correspondences" that can "become troubling," as Matthew Boyd Goldie observed (2010: 5), through the various ways in which "uncanny similarities" (35) invert and distort Western orthodoxies. The antipodal strain in Melville, for example, uses the discursive orbit of the Southern Hemisphere to reflect US domestic politics in a kind of crazy mirror, where power relations and affective investments are held together in a symbiotic equation that brings "civilized" and "primitive" together in a reciprocal double-bind. This, of course, is the rationale for Ishmael in *Moby-Dick* calling the Maori, Queequeg, his "inseparable twin brother" (1982: 320), while designating himself "a savage, owning no allegiance but to the King of the Cannibals" (270). Writing to his publisher of *Typee* in 1846, Melville disparaged "senseless sceptics – men who go straight from their cradles to their graves & never dream of the queer things going on at the antipodes" (1993: 65–66), and his own fiction relates "antipodes" to "queer" across a conceptual as well as a geographic spectrum. Throughout seventeenth-century drama, the idea of antipodes gained currency as a suggestive term indicating "unnatural" sexual practices of various kinds, women on top of men and so on (Goldie 2010: 88), and Melville resituates this conceit of antipodes as transgression within a more expansive geopolitical circumference.

After Melville, journeys to Australasia and the South Pacific became a more regular occurrence for American writers – Twain, Henry Adams, and Jack London all made the trip – but alignments of the antipodes with a sense of systematic disorientation were carried forward from an earlier era. Several twentieth-century American poets also spent time in Australia: Karl Shapiro served in the American forces in the Pacific region during World War II, while Allen Ginsberg arrived for a reading tour in 1972, when he also visited sacred Indigenous sites at Ayers Rock. During this tour Ginsberg extolled to local newspapers the Aboriginal "song men," claiming that they "carry in their heads one of the great epic traditions still alive on the planet" (Schumacher 2016: 564). Ginsberg's engagement with Australian Aboriginal cultures subsequently influenced the chant-like style of his own poetry, and this suggests how an antipodean impetus of displacement and realignment

can illuminate familiar texts in heterodox ways. To consider Ginsberg's poetry alongside that of Indigenous cultures, for example, is to recognize it as engaging with complex international scenarios. Just as Ginsberg himself internalized Aboriginal culture to reshape his own poetry, so a critical reading of Ginsberg from a position of antipodean parallax opens up perspectives on his work that might not otherwise be visible.

In *Asia as Method* (2010), his study of how Americanization has operated in Taiwan and "the capitalist zone of East Asia" (7), social scientist Kuan-Hsing Chen used a geographic location to tease out the "far-reaching psychic and cultural effects of colonialism" in this region (121). Similarly extrapolating a formal principle of inquiry from a specific geographic space, it might be possible to posit an idea of "Australia as Method," using the country's axes of spatial and temporal disjunction to open up zones of alterity and thus to interrogate the ordered patterns of Western culture more generally. Just as the diffuse scales of antipodean space and time disturb the Northern Hemisphere's more familiar geographic coordinates, along with its received assumptions of temporal progression, so a critical narrative that internalizes antipodean scales of time and space has the capacity to add an extra dimension to Western culture, both geographically and intellectually.

The crucial point to emphasize here is how this is not merely a heterodox rearrangement, a *jeu d'esprit* to turn the established world upside down. Nor is it, in J. G. A. Pocock's words, to "attempt the absurdity of imposing an antipodean framework on the history of the British kingdoms" ([2003] 2005: 21), or indeed on the wider world, in a sweeping gesture of reverse colonialism. The latter, a New Zealander by birth though he has long worked in the United States, has sought consistently to reconstitute British and American political history as, in his own words, "an association of insular and emigrant peoples, who had set going a diversity of histories in settings archipelagic, Atlantic and oceanic" (21). In this way, Pocock, working through transatlantic and antipodean intellectual frameworks, effectively reconstitutes "Britain as another archipelago" (23). Thus, by tracing transnational affiliations, he elucidates a sense of "peoples in motion, histories traversing distance" (23), a momentum that had been unwarrantably excluded from the more nationalist traditions of Anglo-American historiography. The beneficial product of this is to reclassify Western culture according to spatial and temporal dimensions that have conventionally been occluded. By reconfiguring the spatial contours of his field of inquiry, approaching North American history through an Atlantic oceanic perspective rather than understanding North America in the more conventional way as an autonomous land mass, Pocock illuminated

American culture by repositioning it within a more fluid conceptual matrix. Like Chen, Pocock deployed a particular spatial circumference to develop from this geographical position an alternative way of thinking. The antipodal turn similarly starts from a geographical premise but then expands the specificity of particular locations into a wider discursive sphere, one predicated upon a method of reversal rather than progressive synthesis.

In *Cool Memories* ([1987] 1990), Jean Baudrillard declared that "the most original thing the eighteenth century invented wasn't the Enlightenment but the Southern hemisphere" (166), adding that by "its remoteness, insularity and ancestry, Australia is already a kind of spaceship, a kind of continent adrift on another geographic and temporal orbit" (164). There would, of course, be much for materialist scholars to complain about in this notion of the Southern Hemisphere being an eighteenth-century invention, but Baudrillard's provocation does foreground ways in which the ancestral past, no less than the Anthropocenic future, are bound up paradoxically with the signifying regimes of the present. In his subsequent work *The Illusion of the End* ([1992] 1994), Baudrillard specifically drew on images of inversion to justify his thesis of a "reversal of history" (10), within whose "retroactive form" (115) emerged "a topsy-turvy rewriting of the whole history of the twentieth century" (32). Despite Baudrillard's own disavowal of history, it is easy enough to see from a perspective of twenty-five years later how his view of history moving "closer to its antipodal point" (10) was related to a particular version of historical narrative, "the end of linearity" (10), rather than to any collapse of history as a phenomenon *tout court*; he was, after all, writing shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, with a prognosis of the "end of history" being part of the common wisdom of that period (see, for example, Fukuyama 1992). Nevertheless, Baudrillard's notion of the "retroversion of history" (11) accords with a transposition of time as running from present to past rather than just from past to present to future, a reverse trajectory given intellectual justification by Hayden White and other post-structuralist historians of this era. Michael Holly, for example, wrote in 1992 of how "[w]henever one writes about something from a historical point of view, one is always writing backwards: following a reverse metonymic chain of explanation: trying to deduce what once was, from what now is" (1992: 205–7). Rather than merely implying some kind of inherently perverse approach to history, in other words, Holly suggested that all narratives of history are necessarily inscribed in reverse form, from front to back, with cause being extrapolated from effect.

In this sense, the antipodal turn can be seen to assume a more generalized significance in its representation of time as well as space, indicating ways in which its transposed systems of signification take on larger cultural ramifications. Though it is associated with specific geographical locations and shifting planetary dynamics, it is not confined to them. By developing outward from a local base into wider conceptual arcs, the antipodal recalibration of time and space marks a substantive reimagination of cultural relations between North and South, West and East, across an extensive global compass.

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26

The Region as an In-between Space: Tomas Tranströmer's *Östersjöar* and the Making of an Archipelagic Nordic Literature

DAN RINGGAARD

The Region as the Middle Term

In *Futures of Comparative Literature*, the 2017 ACLA State of the Discipline Report, Christopher Bush discusses the theoretical affordances of working with "Areas: bigger than the nation, smaller than the world" (2017: 171). He speaks of "critical regionalism" as "a general trend in literary scholarship," a "pursuit of new (or renewed) geographies that go beyond the nation but resist the centrifugal pull, the temptation, of 'the world'" (171). Areas in this sense "are heterogenous and, unlike the areas of area studies, by no means mutually exclusive" (171). Considering world literature not as the vehicle of the all too tempting centrifugal pull but as a field of diverse conjectures on how to do post-national literary studies, Bush suggests the domain of the "[s]upernational but subglobal" as a promising working space (172). Areas "break open the limits of the national while retaining enough specificity to allow for in-depth research and knowledge of the relevant languages for example" – although not without running the risk of repeating the flaws of national literary history by drawing excessively sharp boundaries and insisting on the existence of similarities within them (172).

But is the area, or the region, really a solution to the schism between the smooth space of globality and the singularity of the local? Or does it merely, as the reservations suggest, reproduce well-known patterns on a different scale? Does a change of scale in itself result in new ways of reading and understanding? Does it provoke or permit new approaches, or will it simply prove irrelevant if it is not accompanied by a more substantial rethinking of the way we do comparative literature?

Naturally, Bush does not claim that the in-between scale of the area in itself will solve all the problems raised by these questions, but he does speak of a "qualitative compromise between nation and world" (172). An influential forerunner for such a "qualitative compromise" is Milan Kundera's essay "Die Weltlitteratur": "Between the *large context* of the world and the *small context* of the nation, a middle step might be imagined: say, a *median context*. Between Sweden and the world, that step is Scandinavia. For Columbia, it is Latin America. And for Hungary, for Poland?" he asks, and then answers: Central Europe (2013: 291). On closer inspection, Kundera's "median context" turns out to be less a "qualitative compromise" between the nation and the world than it is a way of escaping two kinds of national provincialisms, each in its own way preventing an aesthetic appreciation of literature that (to Kundera) is cosmopolitan by definition. The provincialism of the small nation tends to regard national literature as something remote from the grand circuit of world literature, treating it as a vehicle of cultural and historical knowledge rather than an aesthetic expression, whereas the provincialism of big nations prevents a broader engagement with the world because the literature of such nations constitutes a world of its own. The purpose of "median context" is to avoid these two provincialisms. For instance, once you say the magic phrase "Central Europe," the four great "antimodern modernists" (Kafka, Musil, Broch, and Gombrowicz) escape the confines of their respective national literatures and become world literature (299). Underneath the three-layered model that Kundera suggests lies Goethe's dualism between national and world literature: "[T]he only approach that can bring out a novel's *aesthetic value*" is to let it "embrace the *large context* of world literature" (292). Although pointing to the middle ground of Central Europe and claiming a certain cultural and historical affinity among the four above-mentioned novelists, the region as a concept does not negotiate the local and the global. There is no anxiety regarding the global in Kundera, only a desire for a certain cultural embeddedness, a modesty of reach, that keeps him from moving beyond historical particulars and the intoxicating patchwork of Europe.

What Kundera's essay reveals is that a change in scale does not necessarily coincide with a change in attitude. Kundera criticizes provincialism and advocates for cosmopolitanism, but his cosmopolitanism is limited to a regional scale. This matches the original meaning of the word perfectly: the cosmopolitan inhabits the world (cosmos) *and* the city (polis). But it is at odds with the notion that cosmopolitanism primarily means world

citizenship that Kundera seems to be advocating for, and with the schism between free-wheeling globality and the resistance of the local that, as indicated in Bush's warning against the global pull, seems to be increasingly at the centre of discussions of world literature. Scale is not enough. You can go down in scale and still retain a cosmopolitan attitude.

Counter-Mappings

What kind of attitude, then, is called for? When Bush speaks of the global pull, he implies a critical stance against global homogeneity also articulated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ursula K. Heise, Emily Apter, and others. Their criticism points in different directions, but they share an effort to foreground (respectively) alterity, rupture, and untranslatability at the expense of seamless connectivity and unhindered movement. In *Death of a Discipline*, Spivak suggests replacing the abstract Globe with the Planet, not as its opposite (that would be a holistic Earth) but as a figure of alterity. As a figure, planetarity is "undecidable and yet we must attempt to dis-figure it" (Spivak 2003: 71). To "dis-figure" the figure connotes a decoding of the figure but a decoding that spoils the shape of the figure and turns it into something that is like and yet unlike itself – in one word: uncanny. Spivak lifts the Freudian figure of the uncanny out of its masculine European environment in order to use it as a tool for "the planet to overwrite the globe" (72). Any figure postpones the truth by constant recourse to additional sensible worlds. It navigates between epistemology and phenomenology. The job of literary studies is to engage in and perform such a figurative discourse, one in which the continued production of meaning relies on the alterity of the phenomenon. Along these lines, planetarity is regarded as challenging the optimized flows of uniform values attributed to globalization as well as the uncritical sameness of the other that characterizes early eco-criticism.

In *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*, Ursula K. Heise shares Spivak's skepticism with regard to the holistic inclinations of eco-criticism but prefers a revision of globalization theory to Spivak's speculative reliance on an enigmatic phenomenal world. She criticizes the figuration of Planet-Earth as an autonomous, self-generating entity drifting across the universe, an idea that has been a symbol for the ecological movement since the sixties. The picture has lent itself to anti-technological ideologies and to dystopian as well as utopian fantasies. Heise replaces Planet-Earth with the technologically implanted and symbol-ridden Google-Earth. The Earth is one and whole, but it is seen through layers of heterogeneous data. There is no continuity across

the layers but rather an uneven spread of technologies and information. The globe is not accessible prior to our technological use of it, and there is no clean steaming organism free of humankind's shifting and diverse codes and symbols. Google-Earth is the visualization of a technologically implanted nature. The rupture on which Heise insists is one of mediation and montage. Deterritorialization has outmoded the slogan "Think global, act local." Instead, Heise suggests an eco-cosmopolitanism, or briefly put, a globalization theory plus rupture (as in Ulrich Beck's concept of cosmopolitanism) that includes nature.

Emily Apter's *Against World Literature* is a head-on critique of the global aspirations of world literature, whether it takes the form of Franco Moretti's *in toto* mapping of genres or David Damrosch's ideas of translatability across time and space. If the question that ignited the rethinking of world literature was "How do we make comparative literature truly global?", Apter's answer is: "Don't even try." Not because comparative literature should not embrace all the literatures of the world, but because global aspirations erase the differences on which the concept of comparison relies and end up running the errands of the global market by constructing alibis for easy-accessible university courses on literary highlights. Apter recommends untranslatability as a relentless attention to complexity and difference roaming between the relativist model of Barbara Cassin's etymological disseminations and Alan Badiou's "subjective truth" (2013: 27). In the words of Shaden M. Tageldin and her text on "Untranslatability" in the 2017 ACLA report: "Why does untranslatability compel us now? I would suggest that untranslatability fascinates comparatists today because the idea teeters on the threshold between the imagined absolutism of the theological and the imagined relativism of the worldly, cross-contaminating both" (2017: 234). Untranslatability gestures in two directions at once: toward the insurmountable myriad of lived life and toward the sense of the unnameable universal – the latter being the case in Walter Benjamin's influential essay on translation, for instance. In her chapter on "Monde," Apter demonstrates the complexity of and differences contained within a multilingual examination of the term. One important distinction that is made in this chapter is between *kosmos* and *mundus* as a world system and the German *Welt* as phenomenological worlds, and the related distinction between the English "'globalization' (the crushing uni-totality of the network society) and [the French] *mondialisation* (a creative 'world-forming')" (2013: 187). What do we mean by "world" in world literature, Apter asks, and opts for *Welt* and *mondialisation*.

Apter's critique of the field of world literature might be deemed to be oversimplified. One might prefer Bush's understanding of world literature as "a variety of disparate and even mutually contradictory possibilities for what might come after nation-based literary studies" (2017: 171) But it is also possible to accept Apter's distinction between a truly comparative comparative literature and world literature as the particular tradition of Damrosch, Moretti, Casanova, and others. Either way, Apter's critique joins Spivak's and Heise's critique of global homogeneity to establish an attitude of resistance. With their emphasis on alterity, rupture, and untranslatability, they offer a way to qualify the region as an in-between space. The region may function not just as an organizing principle on a different scale, but as a place of defiance against "anodyne globalism," as Tageldin puts it (2017: 234), as well as national border patrolling. I write "may" because the next question that arises is whether the concept of region, or area, is the right fit for this attitude of resistance. Both terms are territorial after all, just like nation and globe, implying a considerable degree of autonomy. So are planetarity and Google-Earth, you might object, but that does not remove the suspicion that the container metaphor in itself poses a problem.

Within so-called island studies, recent interest in the concept of the archipelago might serve as a solution.[1] The archipelago is not prone to utopian isolation like the island, nor is it as vast and limitless as the sea. As such it opens a middle ground analogous to that of the region. Furthermore, the precise boundaries of an archipelago can be difficult to establish, and the whole logic of a group of related islands in the sea calls for an awareness of itineraries and connectivity both within the group and between the group and the surrounding world. It has been argued that on closer inspection many nations, such as Canada and Australia, are in fact archipelagoes: once our focus on the mainland shifts to the number of units of a particular nation or region, what we see are often a large number of islands (Stratford et al. 2011). In "Island Movements: Thinking with the Archipelago," Jonathan Pugh argues that the archipelago puts space and place to the fore while at the same time denaturalizing established ideas about both. The archipelago is also a place of metamorphosis: "Moving oceans and shifting island

1 The concept of the archipelago was first developed by Elaine Stratford et al. (2011), and *Island Studies Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2013) is dedicated to the subject. Elizabeth McMahon establishes a connection to planetarity and discusses the archipelago in relation to post-national literature in two articles (2013a and 2013b) of which one is included in that issue. Frits Andersen (2018) suggests using the concept as a post-national way of doing comparative literature.

boundaries radically decentre and push the notion of 'island' beyond singularity to emphasize mobile, multiple and interconnected forms" (Pugh 2013: 12). Taking up the Caribbean and especially the work of Derek Walcott, Pugh speaks of the "creole archipelago" as "the product of multiple spatial trajectories composed of cumulative tossings about and coming together" (16). In this line of thinking, archipelagoes move to the conceptual forefront of the post-national era since many of them are notoriously hard to pin down as units, though they are also singular in the way that they (as fields of metamorphosis) negotiate the regional or global flows that constitute them and have constituted them throughout history.

The following section analyzes the making of the region as a world (in Apter's sense) within a singular archipelagic literary text – specifically, Swedish poet and Nobel Prize-winner Tomas Tranströmer's 1974 long poem *Östersjöar*, or *Baltics*. With the aid of the figures of resistance that I have lined up, as well as the concept of the archipelago, I want to demonstrate that Tranströmer is in fact making not a region but an archipelagic world. Following a reading of the poem, I will ask whether the poem's "counter-mapping" (Stratford et al. 2011: 121) can contribute to rethinking the specific regional literature to which Tranströmer belongs, the one that Kundera mentions in his essay, that of Scandinavia.

Archipelagic Worldmaking

Östersjöar is Tomas Tranströmer's only genuinely long poem. It consists of six sections held together in a free symphonic composition with variations of themes inside and between the parts. In a brief note, Tranströmer says that the making of the poem "was guided by spontaneous associations within a wide frame" (Ringgren 1997: 16).[2] Tranströmer is usually regarded as a master of condensation, so the challenge he faced in writing a long poem was to keep it loose, prose-like even, alternating with passages of semantic and metaphoric density. In the words of Magnus Ringgren, *Östersjöar* is a fragmentary tale built "around a sea," with "episodes that put together form the complex and personally tinted story of the Baltic Sea," which according to Tranströmer is only held together by his voice (12).[3] The poem is centered on Runmarö, a small island in the Stockholm archipelago where Tranströmer stayed as a child with his grandparents and later in life had a house. The poem also takes the reader to

2 "styrdes av spontana associationer inom en vid ram" (all translations mine unless noted otherwise).

3 "kring ett hav, episoder som tilsammans bilder den sammansatta och perseonligt färgade berättelsen om Östersjön".

the neighboring village of Sandhamn, to the larger Swedish island of Gotland, to Latvia, and many other places. In his note on the poem, Tranströmer mentions a visit to Riga as one of the "many things" that "found their place" in the poem "in a fragmentary form" (12).[4] The comment indicates that it is a personal and eclectic map of the region that he is drawing, if it is a map at all.

The title pulls in the same direction. *Östersjön* is the Swedish name for the Baltic Sea, a name literally meaning "the East Sea." The primary meaning of *sjö* is lake, but the word can also mean "sea" or "large wave." The connotation of the word "lake" emphasizes the circumscribed nature of the waterscape. There is nothing oceanic about it. The uncommon plural form, *Östersjöar*, suggests that there are many versions of the Baltic Sea, depending on time, place, and person, and summons the image of large waves, since these are commonly referred to in the plural as *sjöar* (Ringgren 1997: 12–13). The title suggest that the region is intimate, changeable, and characterized by the ever-present sound and rhythm of the waves. The waves can even be heard in the two alliterated trochaics of the title. Most of this diverse information is lost in translation, and not much is gained by the word "Baltics." The poem opens by looking back in time and out into the world:

> It was before the time of the radio masts
>
> Grandfather was a new pilot. In the almanac, he wrote down the ships he guided – Names, destinations, drafts.
> Examples from 1884:
>
> SS Tiger Capt. Rowan 16 ft. Hull Gefle Furusund
> Brig Ocean Capt. Andersen 8 ft. Sandöfjord Hernösand Furusund
> SS St. Petersburg Capt. Libenberg 11 ft. Stettin Libau Sandhamn
>
> (Tranströmer 2015: 45)[5]

The proper names refer to England, Denmark, Norway, Russia, Germany, Poland, Latvia – even Asia, if we count the reference to the SS *Tiger* – while the poem's political excursions include South Africa, the Soviet Union, and Nazi-Germany. Later in the poem, French escargots and Caribbean conches, among other things, appear as items in the imported inventory of the place.

4 "så jag började arbeta på en rörig skiss där många saker fick plass – till och med mitt besök i Riga är med, i fragmentarisk form."

5 "Det var före radiomasternas tid. // Morfar var nybliven lots. I almanackan skrev han upp de fartyg han lotsade – / namn, destinationer, djupgång. / Exempel från 1884: / Ångf TigerCapt Rowan16 fotHull Gefle Furusund / Brigg OceanCapt Andersen8 fotSandefjord Hernösand Furusund / Ångf St. PetersborgCapt Libenberg11 fotStettin Libau Sandhamn" (Tranströmer 1974: 9).

Östersjöar is obviously a place of global reach and open borders, but the global manifests itself locally in what follows immediately after this list. Here the poem follows the slow and risky movement of a pilot in the fog of the archipelago. "'[W]e're right here,'" the poet and grandchild state, pointing at the exact location (45).[6] The connection between the global and the local is troubled by linguistic difficulties because the sailors must have communicated in "misspelled English, understanding and misunderstanding" (45).[7] The theme of communication is central to the poem (Espmark 1983: 233), and the intricacies of global understanding are immediately countered by the mastery of local interpretation: "His eyes read straight into the invisible. / (Did he have the labyrinth in his head?)" (Tranströmer 2015: 45).[8]

Section I opens with this movement through the archipelagic labyrinth toward the sea. Section two, likewise, proceeds from the inner island to the open sea, "reaching a point where the borders open / or rather / where everything becomes border" (47).[9] Boundaries also emerge as another key theme. The paradoxical lines above encourage several conjectures regarding the sea and borders: the borderless expanse of the sea, the sea as a place between borders, the idea of the border as a meeting place, the sea as the border of the land, the borderline of the horizon, and not least, at the time of the poem's publication, the hard border between Eastern and Western Europe epitomized in one of the most frequently quoted lines of the poem: "But it's a long way to Liepäja" (in Latvia) (57).[10] This encourages an archipelagic mode of thinking. The Baltics are not a place of definite borders like the island, nor of open space like the sea, but rather they are presented through the dynamic image of the pilot (and the poet) navigating a labyrinth of ambiguous boundaries.

In section V, the horizon reappears in a complex image that highlights the mediated nature of the poem that has already been introduced by the almanac. The poet claims to "have been writing a long letter to the dead / on a typewriter that has no ribbon, just a thread of horizon / so the words knock in vain and nothing sticks" (61).[11] This image of a ribbonless typewriter isn't simply about an inability to express oneself; it is about a form of writing that aspires to signify directly on the landscape but that instead finds the landscape inside the typewriter, already mediated by technology. Throughout the poem, various

6 "'just här är vi'" (10). 7 "felstavad engelska, samförstånd och missförstånd" (9).
8 "Ögonen läste rätt in i det osynliga / (Hade han labyrinten i huvudet?)" (10).
9 "når då en punkt där gränserna öppnas / eller snarare / där allting blir gräns" (13).
10 "Men det är långt till Liepäja" (26).
11 "skriver sen dess ett långt brev till de döda / på en maskin som inte har färgband bare en horisontstrimma / så orden bultar förgäves och ingenting fastnar" (31).

documents, technologies, and genres mediate access to place and memory, be they almanacs, inscriptions, photographs, encyclopedic entries, diaries, chronicles, psalms, anecdotes, radio masts, typewriters, or even computers. *Östersjöar* is partly a documentary montage poem in the modernist tradition of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, bordering on prose. In many passages the extremely long lines are cut short by the page, and section IV includes actual prose passages. The epistemological condition of this poem of place and memory is one of representational rupture, of technological and symbolic interference, a Google-Earth Baltics. The same thing applies to the axis between the local and the global as well. The non-oceanic sea does not offer free access to a uniform world. Instead, it is a place of physical, political, linguistic, and mediatized boundaries. It is a sea of obstacles, an archipelago.

The longing for a time before the epistemological boundaries of mediation and montage is expressed in the very first words of the poem: "It was before the time of the radio towers." The line itself draws a boundary in time. Historical time and clock-time set up such boundaries, but "inside me time stands still, infinite," just as the sea, a few lines later is a "calm infinite roof" (57).[12] Another arena for the dialectics of boundaries is the surface of the sea. Under water, the jellyfish have a perfect form, but "if you take them out of the water their entire form disappears, like when an unspeakable truth is lifted up out of the silence and expressed as lifeless gel, yes, they're untranslatable, they must stay in their own element" (59).[13] Aphasia, dreams, and music follow as examples of this "underwater signification," a mode of expression that, like the jellyfish, is unrecognizable once it is taken out of its element, something that cannot be clearly defined but nevertheless functions on the level of tone, voice, or style. The poet, for example, speaks of "the high nocturnal style" (Tranströmer 1987: 135).[14]

The large waves of the sea work at a similar frequency. They are omnipresent: "the Baltic sighs in the island's interior; deep in the forest you're out on the open sea" (47).[15] This is how the second section begins, and it closes with the "sea-wind" moving rhythmically through the island like "The dry sighing / of giant doors opening and closing" (Tranströmer

12 "inne i mig står tiden stilla, oändligt med tid . . . ett stilla oändligt tak" (25–26). Crane (2015) writes "endless roof," Tranströmer uses "oändligt" (infinite) both times.

13 "tar man upp dem ur vattnet försvinner all form hos dem, som när en obeskrivlig sanning lyfts upp ur tystnaden och formuleras till död gelé, ja de är oöversättliga, de måste stanna i sitt element" (29).

14 "den stora nattliga stilen" (30). I use Fulton's translation here. Crane (2015) translates this as "great nightly writing" while Tranströmer uses "stilen" (the style).

15 "Östersjön susar också mitt inne på ön, långt inne i skogen är man ute på öppna sjön" (13).

2015: 49).[16] Later on, the poet hears "the sighing in the spruce / It's close. It's / today. / The waves are present" (53).[17] These words end a stanza in which a group of people in an old photograph fade away, leaving the tangible presence of the rocky landscape behind them as the only consistent element in the change of time. The twinned voice of the waves and the wind also ends the poem as the universal rhythm of life and death: "The hovel shines / with all those who were carried by a certain wave, by a certain wind / out here to their fates" (67).[18] Magnus Ringgren suggests that instead of closing the text in a circular movement, the ending gives the poem over to the wanderings of the winds and the waves, thereby upholding the principle of association and vagary which characterizes it (1997: 117) and confirming this statement from section III: "A synopsis can't be given, a synopsis is impossible" (Tranströmer 2015: 55).[19]

The idea of the omnipresent nature of rock, waves, and wind resembles Spivak's reading of the weather at the end of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* as an example of planetarity in *Death of a Discipline*. When the dead person is gone and every trace of her is erased, all that is left is the presence of the planet: "The rest is weather. Not the breath of the disremembered and unaccounted for, but wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather" (2003: 88). This is the ecological side of planetarity, the environment becoming figure instead of ground. In Tranströmer's poem, the Baltics gain a tangible speechless presence beyond any imaginable boundary. On the one hand, *Östersjöar* offers a transgression of boundaries, a wormhole into a universal experience that cannot be translated into words, what Tageldin called "the imagined absolutism of the theological" and Apter "subjective truth" (2013: 27). On the other hand, the loose frame, the prose, and montage form of the poem allow plenty of room for what Tageldin called "the imagined relativism of the worldly" or what Apter called "linguistic relativism" (27). As the poem's title suggests, there is just too much of it to map: "A synopsis can't be given." But then again, an untranslatable sense of a world,

16 "havblåsten . . . Det torra suset / av stora portar som öppnas och store portar som stängs" (15). The wind is not sighing in the Swedish version. Tranströmer speaks of the "rush" of the wind.

17 "Jag kan höra suset i granarna. / Det er nära. Det är / idag. / Vågorna är aktuella" (21). Crane writes "up-to-date," Tranströmer's word is "aktuella," which means "present" but also "real" and "having been realized." Again Crane chooses "sigh" whereas Tranströmer uses "rush."

18 "Rucklet lyser / av alla dem som fördes av en viss våg, av en viss vind / hit ut till sina öden" (37).

19 "Sammanfattningen kan inte göras, sammanfattningen är omöjlig" (22).

however fluid, runs through it all – as also in the world as in *Welt* (subjective worlds) and *mondialisation* (world-forming).

This vacillation of the poem between excessive immanence and transgressive experience not only characterizes the two sides of untranslatability, but also resembles the figurative workings of planetarity, with an excess of meaning constantly pushing a mirage of truth ahead of itself. In Tranströmer, the image is the place of such a truth. *Östersjöar* ends with the image of a dilapidated fishing hut. First it is likened to an old bull, ring in nose and unwilling to stand. Then another simile slowly develops:

> So much huddling wood. On the roof, ancient tiles collapsed into each other every-which-way
> (the original pattern disturbed by earth's rotation through the years)
> remind me of something . . . I was there . . . wait: it's the old Jewish graveyard in Prague
> where the dead live closer together than they did in life, the stones close close.
> So much encircled love! The roofing tiles with lichens' script written in an unknown tongue
> are the stones in the archipelago folk's ghetto-graveyard, the stones raised up and toppled –
> The hovel shines
> with all those who were carried by a certain wave, by a certain wind
> out here to their fates.
>
> (67)[20]

Channelled by the deep history ("an unknown tongue") and planetary involvement ("earth's rotation") of the fishing hut, the poem finds itself at the Jewish graveyard in Prague with echoes from the third section, where an engraving on a baptismal font in Gotland stands out "shining forth / like a row of teeth in a mass grave," like this: "HEGWALDR" (51).[21] Time and place collapse in the slow discovery of a resemblance between the distorted tiles and the tumbled gravestones, and holocaust and death are given the penultimate word of the poem – the last word going to the wind and the waves. The blending of the tiles and the gravestones, however, ultimately gives way to a third image: an archipelago of surfaces overlapping, crisscrossing, sliding, and tossing in an ultra-slow pattering.

20 "Så mycket hopkurat trä. På taket de uråldriga tegelpannorna som rasat kors och tvärs på varann / (det ursprungliga mönstret rubbat av jordens rotation genom åren) / det påminner om något . . . jag var där . . . vänta: det är den gamla judiska kyrkogården i Prag / där de döda lever tätare än i livet, stenarna tätt tätt / Så mycket inringad kärlek! Tegelpannorna med lavarnas skrivtecken på ett okänt språk / är stenarna på skärgårdsfolkets ghettokyrkogård, stenarna uppresta och hoprasade. – / Rucklet lyser / av alla dem som fördes av en viss våg, av en viss vind / hit ut till sina öden" (37).

21 "framlysande / som en tandrad i en massgrav: / HEGWALDR" 19).

As such, the dilapidated roof of the fishing hut becomes a metaphor for the poem, itself archipelagic in its montage form, challenging the initial impression that the poem is a symphonic composition progressing smoothly in time. As a poem of place and memory, *Östersjöar* instead takes the spatial form of the archipelago, as the archipelago becomes an image of the Baltics as a whole. Yet this archipelago is not limited to the culturally significant Stockholm archipelago, known from canonical works such as August Strindberg's *Hemsöborna* (*The People of Hemsö*, 1887) and Ingmar Bergman's *Sommaren med Monika* (*Summer with Monika*, 1953). Seen from the mainland, as in Bergman's film in particular, the close-to-land archipelago is a liminal, adventurous space between the land and the sea. Seen from the perspective of the navigating pilot, the circling wind, and the omnipresent waves, the Baltic Sea is not a place of nations, nor of mainland and islands, but one large metamorphic space distributed in the loose framing and associative discursions of the prose-like poem.

An Archipelagic Nordic World

Before discussing exactly how Tranströmer's poem can contribute to rethinking of a regional approach, we need to take a look at the region in which his writings are usually understood. "Between Sweden and the world, that step is Scandinavia," Kundera writes. What is Scandinavia? Usually, and especially inside the region, the term "Scandinavia" includes only Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, whereas the term "Nordic" also includes Finland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland – sometimes the Baltic countries as well. Nevertheless, a Scandinavist is someone who does research within the field of Nordic literature, language, and culture. In Danish, I am a professor of "nordisk litteratur," but my official English title is Professor of Scandinavian Literature. Even in the name, the confines of the region are confused. Eighty percent of the population in the region speaks the closely related Nordic Indo-European languages of Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish. Icelandic stems from the same family but is closer to Old Norse, the language of the *sagas* and the *eddas* that was spoken in varieties throughout the region during the Viking Age and the early Middle Ages. The other language families spoken in the region – Finnish, Sámi, and Inuit – are of different origins, as are the main languages spoken by recent immigrants. Throughout the Viking Age and the Middle Ages, there was a common culture from the southern tip of Greenland to the west coast of Finland, and from 1397 to 1523, the Kalmar Union, a frail union between the kingdoms of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, defined the region. In the following centuries, the region was

split on a shifting west–east axis between the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden, in what resembled a colonial formation, until the independence of Norway (1905), Finland (1917), and Iceland (1918/1943). Today the Faroe Islands and Greenland are self-governing countries within the kingdom of Denmark. During the twentieth century a social-democratic version of the welfare state characterized the region and, with it, a shared culture within areas as different as pedagogy, feminism, and design. The epithets "Scandinavian" and "Nordic" now function as global brands ("Nordic noir" or "Scandinavian design," for instance).

So there are cultural, historical, and linguistic reasons for regarding the Nordic countries as a region, although this list is in no way exhaustive. As an imagined community, the region is referred to in two distinct discourses: one developed in romanticism, with the search for a national identity (influenced by Johann Gottfried Herder in particular) drawing heavily on the common culture of the Viking Age and the Middle Ages and making Nordic identity an integral part of respective national identities; and another recent discourse created by the global gaze, in which the region appears homogenous and is created from within and without as a brand. From a scholarly perspective, the global gaze has been important in establishing the Nordic region as an area of study in the post-national era, and it has produced (and is currently producing) a number of regional literary histories, the three largest of which so far are *The History of Nordic Women's Literature* (Vols. I–V), *A Cultural History of the Avantgarde in the Nordic Countries* (Vols. I–III), and *Nordic Literature: A Comparative History* (Vols. I–III). The last two have yet to be completed.

In their general introduction to *Nordic Literature* – the volumes are part of the ICLA series of regional literatures initiated by Mario J. Valdés on the basis of some of the ideas presented in his and Linda Hutcheon's anthology *Rethinking Literary History* (2002) – Steven Sondrup and Mark Sandberg comment on the status of the region. Although it is "not utterly arbitrary," they write, "it is also not absolute" (2017: 4). For instance, one might frame the region differently by regarding the North Sea and the Baltic Sea as the twin maritime centers of the region, a reasonable choice from a historical trade perspective – and an archipelagic one. If this is done, Britain, the Netherlands, and Germany would be part of the western region, while Russia, the Baltic countries, Poland, and Germany would be part of the eastern region. Another way to expose the porous boundaries and distorted shape of the region would be to point to the considerable political importance of Russia with regard to Finland, Germany's influence on Danish culture in particular, and modern Iceland's orientation toward North America. For this

reason, a Nordic literary history must avoid simply affirming the existence of the region and should instead regard any such enterprise as a way "to test the substance of the regional idea through comparative literary analysis" (4). In other words, and in accordance with Bush's suggestions, the region may function as a testing ground for post-national literary studies – on the one hand as a necessary revision of national literary studies, and on the other as a local resistance within the expanse of world literature.

The question remains: if we maintain that the region offers a promising work space for post-national literary studies, how then can we qualify this space? Following Tranströmer's *Östersjöar*, I conclude this chapter by suggesting six imperatives, bearing in mind that although one poem cannot provide a method, it may offer a way of thinking about a subject or, in this case, a region.

Write spatial history, not historical narrative. Study time as it passes through space or is obstructed by it (space obstructs, time flies), or study nation-crossing itineraries at a particular period in time; view the Nordic region as an archipelago of islands and peninsulas centered around two seas with historically shifting borders. *Do inconclusive, decentred mapping* (or counter-mapping). Circumscribe a space, do not try to be comprehensive, and avoid thinking from the center (think from places such as Runmarö!). This will enable you to excavate the power geographies (Massey 2005) of a place, for instance. *Draw up worlds*, not systems. Do this by forming meaningful wholes or patterns of a certain range defined by particular interests: this is what *Welt* ("worlds," for me) and *mondialisation* ("world-forming") mean. *Compare incidents*, not containers (such as nations). These incidents may be texts, events, or ideas, and they may be of varying kinds and scales as long as they are approximately within the circumscribed space and make up meaningful worlds. *Redirect attention*. Make the next stop point in a different direction from the previous stop without losing a sense of world as textuality or interconnectedness: ruptures are welcome, as are variations of the same. *Write prose*. Prose is the discourse that strains to contain and make sense of the excess of the phenomenal world (Ginsburg and Nandrea 2006; Melberg 2008; Andersen 2010), and in doing so, not only does it reach beyond literary texts, but it also provokes its own counter-image: poetry as the vehicle of the equally untranslatable subjective truth.

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PART V

⋆

WORLD LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION

27

Translating Iconoclasm: Sino-Muslim Azharites and South-South Translations

MICHAEL GIBBS HILL

This chapter takes up a small part of the writings of a group of intellectuals who worked in the 1930s and 1940s to think through the connections between China, Islam, the Arab world, and literatures in Chinese and Arabic. From 1931 to 1937, thirty-three Muslim citizens of the Republic of China went to study at al-Azhar University in Cairo, in part under the sponsorship of Egyptian kings Fuʾād the First and Fārūq the First. Many of them spent between five and ten years in Egypt, gaining a full command of Arabic and working to transmit Islamic learning to their coreligionists in China and to sinophone Muslims in Southeast Asia.[1] They also translated what falls under the category of literature: Na Xun (1911–89), or Muḥammad Nūr Nāhīn al-Ṣīnī, for example, spent the better part of his adult life preparing the first complete translation from Arabic into Chinese of *The Thousand and One Nights*. The Chinese Azharites also published to varying degrees in Arabic: Ma Jian (1906–78), or Muḥammad Mākīn al-Ṣīnī, who translated the most widely used Chinese-language version of the Qurʾān, also prepared an Arabic translation of the *Analects* of Confucius.

I believe the Chinese Azharites deserve far wider attention beyond the usual fields in which they are discussed, such as the history of Islam in China as practiced in the anglophone world and much of Europe, or the history of nationalities or *minzu shi* as practiced in the People's Republic of China. At a time when approaches to world literature, literary world-systems, planetary modernisms, and other attempts to go beyond the boundaries of national literatures and languages default all too quickly to monolingual approaches, these intellectuals provide a valuable historical example and theoretical resource for our own scholarly practice.[2] Writing well before the Bandung

1 A number of important works have been published on the Chinese Hui Azharites. For two works in English, see Benite 2008 and Chen 2014.

2 Some recent discussions of monolingualism, translation, and world literature include Apter 2013; Mufti 2016; and Venuti 2016.

era, when publications such as *Lotus* created new exchanges between writers of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, this group of thinkers worked with the limited resources available to them to understand the opportunities and dangers created by political upheavals all around them.[3] We see this process at work in the writings of Ma Junwu (1913?–71), particularly his translation of the first volume of Taha Husayn's (1889–1973) well-known work *The Days* (*al-Ayyām*).

Ma Junwu, also known as Ma Xingzhou and Ma Moxi, was born in Kunming in southwestern China and traveled to Cairo in 1934. Shortly after his arrival, he began publishing a ten-book series of translations of Arabic literature with World Bookstore (Shijie shuju), a major publisher in Shanghai. This series included translations of abridgements of well-known Arabic works, including the "Merchant of Baghdad" story cycle from *The Thousand and One Nights*, the *Travels of Ibn Battuta*, and the *History of Ibn Yaqdhan* (*Hayy Ibn Yaqdhan*), a philosophical tale by twelfth-century thinker Ibn Tufayl (1105–85).[4] Ma Junwu also published in journals in China that were directed toward Muslim audiences (see, for example, Ma 1940a). It also appears that while in Egypt he came to work for the Republic of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was assigned to the "Muslim Regions" (*Hui bu*) in 1946 and later to ROC consulate in Malaysia. During this time he also participated in diplomatic activities in Southeast China and Southeast Asia.[5] He remained in Malaysia after the 1949 revolution and the founding of the People's Republic of China, probably because his affiliation with the Nationalist-led government would have made it politically untenable for him to return to China. After 1949, Ma regularly contributed essays and translations to *Jiaofeng*, an important venue for sinophone literature in the immediate postwar period, and published at least two books of essays and reminiscences under the *Jiaofeng* imprint.[6]

In the late 1930s Ma Junwu undertook a translation of the first volume of Taha Husayn's *The Days* (*al-Ayyām*), which many critics and readers regard as one of the most important narrative works in modern Egyptian and Arabic literature. The first volume (1929) details Husayn's childhood, including how he lost his eyesight because of a very simple infection that went untreated.

3 For a discussion of *Lotus*, see Halim 2012.

4 To date I have seen only the translations of the *Merchant of Baghdad* (*Bagedade shangren*) (1936) and *Haqiyagezan* (1937). Both works are attributed to "Gaomi'er of Egypt," which suggests that they are translations of condensed or otherwise edited editions of well-known works. I hope in the future to locate their source in Arabic.

5 For a summary of a report Ma prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, see Ma 1948.

6 For an extensive discussion of Ma Junwu's life in Malaysia/Singapore, see Ho 2016.

This volume also focuses on the widespread poverty and low levels of education in the countryside. *The Days* has circulated widely beyond its original language and has been subject to diverging interpretations. In a preface to a French translation that was published in the same year as Ma Junwu's Chinese translation, André Gide called Taha Husayn not an Egyptian writer but "the most eminent representative of the Muslim literature of today" ("le plus éminent représentant de la littérature musulmane d'aujourd'hui") who had finally revived an Arabic literature that – unlike Greek literature – had never rejuvenated its ancient and venerable literary language (Husayn 1984: 9).

Ma Junwu took *The Days* in a very different direction. For him the book served as a way to connect the legacy of the Arab *Nahḍa* (often translated as "renaissance" or "enlightenment") with the anti-traditionalist iconoclasm of the New Culture and May Fourth movements, which lasted from the mid-1910s through the early 1920s and called for thoroughgoing reform in Chinese society and institutions and, among many intellectuals, a rejection of much of traditional Chinese culture and thought.[7] Husayn is regarded as a major writer of the final years of the *Nahḍa*, a period that stretched from the early nineteenth through the early twentieth century and saw the emergence of new political and social thought as well as the growth of a lively new print culture that supported experiments in literature, art, and culture.[8] Ma's work to analyze these two disparate cultural moments in the same frame represents an early attempt to think beyond the usual "East/West" binaries in literature and culture that is characteristic of the works of the Chinese Azharites.

Ma Junwu completed the first draft of his translation, titled *Recollections of Childhood* (*Tongniande huiyi*), around 1939, but did not publish it until 1947, after he returned to China. The delay in publication almost certainly resulted from the disruptions caused by the Second Sino-Japanese War. Even worse, Ma's translation was largely forgotten after 1949; *Recollections* was billed as the first book in a new "Arabic Literature Collection" (*Alabo wenxue congshu*) from the Commercial Press (Shangwu yinshuguan), but none followed it, and the book was never reprinted. Nonetheless, Ma's placement of the translation with the Commercial Press, even if it was at an unlucky moment, was a major accomplishment that gave him a platform with one of China's

7 For a standard if dated account, see Chow 1960.

8 For a brief overview, see El-Ariss 2018; for an overview of Husayn's late thinking on Egyptian and Arab culture, particularly his *Future of Culture in Egypt*, a text that Ma Junwu referenced and clearly had read, see Hourani 1983: 324–40.

largest publishers. Similar translations would not appear until China's favorable relations with Egypt in the 1950s led to a burst of new work in Chinese on the Arab world, including many translations that came from Russian, not Arabic. This use of Russian materials concords with a period of what Nicolai Volland called a period of "socialist cosmopolitanism" that connected the Soviet Union and China from the 1940s through 1960s.[9] Ma's translation thus serves as a forgotten moment both in the history of cultural exchange between China and the Arab world and in the history of Sino-Muslim intellectuals' efforts to speak to a majority Han Chinese audience.

In the years that passed between the completion of the first draft and publication of the final version, Ma Junwu reflected on, wrote about, and revised his translation. The changes he made and his reflections on the process of revision – in particular, his efforts to find an appropriate version of Chinese to match Taha Husayn's Arabic – merit detailed discussion. I will focus in particular on two separate prefaces that Ma wrote for *Recollections of Childhood*, one that appeared in the Islamic journal *The Crescent* (*Yuehua*) in 1940 after he had completed a draft of the translation, and a second that was published with the final version in 1947. Both prefaces made broad comparisons between Egypt and China, arguing that both were ancient civilizations that faced similar challenges from Western colonialism and internal resistance to reform. Ma Junwu compared Taha Husayn, who then was unknown even to most elite readers in China, to Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) and Vasili Eroshenko (1890–1952), two other so-called Eastern writers who had attracted attention from intellectuals in China over the previous twenty years.[10] More important, Ma then compared Taha Husayn and *The Days* to the work of Lu Xun (1881–1936), including stories such as "My Old Home" (*Guxiang*) and the novella *The True Story of Ah Q* (*Ah Q zhengzhuan*), arguing that these two writers occupied a similar place in their respective canons. In the works of Taha Husayn and Lu Xun, Ma saw a commitment to using literature to promote politically modernist thought, to attack outdated ideas and customs wherever they might be, and – perhaps most important – to create a role for the new-style intellectual through these attacks on tradition.

9 See, for example, *Aiji duanpian xiaoshuo* and Shui and Liu, *Alabo duanpian xiaoshuo ji*, both of which were based on Russian-language collections. For a detailed account of literary translation activities in China in the early years of the People's Republic – which depended heavily on Russian-language texts and the Russian-language competencies of editors and translators – see Volland 2017: esp. 153–86. For an overview of these relations, see Gamsa 2010.

10 For a discussion of Tagore in China, see Lahiri 2018; for Eroshenko, see Schor 2016.

Throughout both the 1940 and the 1947 preface, Ma clearly tried to link Husayn to a version of May-Fourth-style iconoclasm.

Reading through *Recollections of Childhood*, we can see how Ma Junwu might have perceived an overlap between Taha Husayn's story and so many classic works of fiction from the canon of the New Culture movement and May Fourth movement. The story of how Taha lost his eyesight at the hands of an unskilled barber easily falls in line with stories such as Lu Xun's "Medicine" (*Yao*) or even Wu Zuxiang's "Young Master Gets His Tonic" (*Guanguande bupin*), both of which use medicine and folk beliefs about human blood to portray Chinese society in a highly negative light.[11] We also see a suspicion of religion: for example, Ma Junwu regularly translates references to Sufi practitioners with the term *Daoshi,*[12] which immediately brings to mind Taoist priests and other practitioners of folk religions in China, all practices that were seen with particular suspicion by New Culture and May Fourth-era intellectuals. Such comparisons in terms of theme and content are also bound together by modernization narratives, where writing about society *now* was deeply tied in with the problem of poverty and the modernization of the countryside. This story is nearly always told from an elite point of view: the peasantry, whether Chinese *nongmin* or Egyptian *fellah*, can represent both an idealized or a demonized version of traditional culture, but in nearly all cases represents a group that must be modernized in order for the nation-state to become modern.[13]

Beyond these general comparisons, *Recollections of Childhood* also offers an important statement on the conditions of translation between Chinese and Arabic at the midpoint of the twentieth century. Previously, this translation work had been focused on religious texts, particularly the Qurʾān, and works related to Islamic theology and thought. Multiple translations of the Qurʾān had raised important questions about which style and register of language in Chinese was suitable to convey the meaning and literary quality of the original text.[14] Ma Junwu takes up this same question in his prefaces, but here the prefaces diverge from one another, and the discrepancies between

11 English translations of these stories are found in Lau, Hsia, and Lee et. al. 1981: 6–10, 372–81.

12 See, for example, Ma Junwu 1947: 15. In a similar grace note, Ma Junwu inserts a reference to one of Taha's pious relatives burning incense when they prayed at dawn – a small fabrication that nonetheless would suggest to a reader in China that this person's faith was comically excessive.

13 See Feuerweker 1998, and Selim 2010.

14 For twentieth-century translations of the Qur'ān, see Henning 2015. For histories of translations and summaries of Islamic thought in Chinese, see Petersen 2018, and Benite 2005.

them show misgivings about his work as a translator and his sense of the institutional limits of his comparative project. In the preface published in 1940, Ma Junwu makes the following comment about his approach as a translator:

> Most of the translation is a strict, direct translation (*yange de zhiyi*), because I wanted to preserve the spirit of the original. Therefore, the language can be rough and awkward, and it can still be difficult to avoid diverging greatly from the original meaning, but I can only allow things to stand as they are. (1940: 2)

The second preface, however, directly contradicts the first:

> As I was being reassigned to the Muslim regions (*Hui bu*), during my journey across the Indian Ocean I brought out the manuscript and proofread the translation against the original once more, fixing many problems . . . One must pay close attention to the structure of the translation to make it into the language of "cart-pullers and street hawkers" (*yinche maijiangzhe liu*) while not losing the spirit of the original, all while believing that one has made sufficient effort. (1947: 9)

The mention of "cart-pullers and street hawkers" in the second passage had a particular meaning in debates about language and culture that took place in China in the 1910s and 1920s. This phrase comes from the translator, writer, and cultural traditionalist Lin Shu (1852–1924), who used these words to describe the Chinese written vernacular (*baihua wen*) in an open letter to Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940), who then was the chancellor of Peking University. This exchange between Lin and Cai came to be seen as a turning point in debates over the merits of the vernacular language and more formal writing (so-called classical Chinese), one that ended with Lin Shu's defeat at the hands of writers and thinkers who would later be canonized as key figures in the New Culture and May Fourth movements.[15] This reference to an open letter written nearly two decades earlier shows both Ma Junwu's strong familiarity with the history of modern Chinese literature and the extent to which the debate about the vernacular and classical languages had shaped intellectuals' fundamental understanding of modern literature.

Ma Junwu signaled that he made substantial revisions to the translation in 1947. What, then, is the difference between the two? Although we do not have two full translations to compare, Ma Junwu's two prefaces both quote the same passage from *The Days*. In these passages, we see meaningful

15 See my discussion in Hill 2013: 213–16.

differences that suggest how the 1940 version (which we do not have in full) and the version published in 1947 diverged from one another and provide clues for how we should understand Ma Junwu's conversion from so-called direct translation to using the language of cart-pullers and hawkers. (See the Appendix, which gives the passage in Arabic and Ma Junwu's two Chinese versions, all with English translations.)

This passage, which comes from the last quarter of the book, explains why Taha Husayn went blind. The narrator uses provocative language to lay the blame for this preventable tragedy on a "sinful" or "criminal philosophy" (*filasafa āthama*) that the boy's mother and all rural women are said to follow. This "philosophy" will determine much about his relationship to language; once his eyesight his gone, the boy must learn written language through listening, oral recitation, and memorization, particularly of the Qur'ān. Michael Allan has argued that later works by Taha Husayn such as *Adīb* (*A Man of Letters*) used the village and village dwellers to mark the limits of literate communities and even the limits of literary imaginings (2016: 127–29). We see a similar operation at work here, as it relates to the origins of Taha Husayn's identity as a writer and how he was placed outside conventional literacy that relies on eyesight and reading. In this strange and vague language that explains the origin of the story – how Husayn was blinded and persevered – we also see Ma Junwu struggling in his revisions to find language that fits within the boundaries of what he considers to be an appropriate idiom in modern Chinese. A close comparison between passages shows that Ma Junwu's final revision simplifies and smooths out the phrasing of the Arabic in at least two places: concerning the child's feelings of ill health, and concerning the so-called criminal or low philosophy of rural women. The translation also eliminates the free indirect speech of the question "What child doesn't complain?" – attributing it directly to the women of the village as a thought or opinion. Other pieces of evidence show that Ma sought to reduce the potential that readers might misunderstand certain cues in the translated text. For example, throughout *Recollections of Childhood*, Ma Junwu simplifies how the narrator refers to the main character (i.e., Husayn himself). The Arabic text nearly always refers to the main character as "our friend" (*saahabna*), "our young lad" (*sabiyyana*), or as "he," as implied by conjugations in Arabic that do not require the use of an attached pronoun. In all cases, however – dozens of times throughout the book – Ma Junwu translates these references with a single Chinese term, "the child" (*haizi*). Although Ma does not explain this choice, it does nudge the reader's attention in a slightly different direction, as the community between narrator and reader that is implied by the use of the pronoun "our" disappears, and the focus settles on a more distant person. This shift in

perspective fits with Ma's effort to bring knowledge of a distant and poorly understood land to a mainstream audience.

Beyond the practical effect of these decisions, Ma Junwu's revision of the Chinese version of Husayn's book offers ways to think about potential points of convergence and divergence, juncture and disjuncture between Chinese and Arabic literary cultures from the late nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century. Both the Arabic and Chinese systems of writing had come under great pressure for reform, including radical proposals to adopt new writing systems altogether.[16] In the case of China, proponents of the written vernacular or *baihua* placed *baihua* in opposition to so-called classical Chinese through an analogy that depended on comparisons to Western European languages, particularly the shift from Latin to vernaculars such as Italian.[17] The institution of a written vernacular or *baihua* in Chinese textbooks in the 1920s led to the slow but sure marginalization of classical Chinese. This process deepened during the Second Sino-Japanese War, when cultural policy often placed an emphasis on popular and so-called national forms.[18] During the same period, written Arabic maintained a wider diversity of expression that is interpreted in varying ways: scholars such as Niloofar Haeri, whose ethnographic accounts of language use in Egypt focus on difficulties in education and even access to employment, sees a clear distinction between "classical Arabic" and local speech.[19] Taking the view of the problem of the vernacular in literary and cultural history, Shaden Tageldin highlights the sense of continuity between ornate, traditional literary Arabic, the current "standard" or *fuṣḥa*, and the various forms of spoken Arabic. Drawing on the history of language reform in China, Tageldin suggests that we consider the "possibility that *baihua* might structurally resemble the modern standard Arabic that emerged as the dominant language of Arabic letters between the mid-nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries" (2018: 120), especially in the way *fuṣḥa* evoked the sense of everyday speech "while being both lexically and grammatically alienated from spoken dialects" (120).

16 For proposals concerning Arabic, see Gully 1997; for Chinese (and examples of proposals for new alphabets for Chinese), see Tsu 2011. For one example of a Romanization of colloquial Egyptian, see Fiske 1904.

17 Shang Wei's "Writing and Speech" (2014) offers an excellent commentary on the history of what constituted the vernacular in early modern China.

18 For a discussion of the Republic of China, see Culp 2008.

19 Haeri's use of the term "classical Arabic" is itself a polemical designation that explicitly declines to recognize distinctions between Modern Standard Arabic (*fuṣḥa*) and literary writing from before the middle of the nineteenth century (2003: xi–xii and 9–21).

In *Recollections of Childhood*, Ma Junwu takes up similar questions: How can the history of written Chinese and written Arabic be seen in relation to one another? More important, how might they be rendered commensurable with one another through translation? Ma Junwu seems compelled not to replicate some of the most important stylistic aspects of Husayn's language for his readers. He hints that he is aware that his use of a smoothed-out *baihua* obscures the historical relationships that inhere within the Arabic language and within Arabic literature. Despite the ways that *fuṣḥa* and *baihua* might overlap, Ma Junwu's misgivings about the commensurability between the language of his translation and Husayn's language show just how difficult it may be to find a place of meeting or intersection in written language. By the 1940s, *baihua* would not have stood in such a strong distinction toward everyday speech or dialect; certainly, nothing like the distinctions drawn between *aamiya* and *fuṣḥa* by Taha Husayn himself in his writings on language. Even if Husayn did not make those distinctions in *The Days*, his book would have carried those associations by the time Ma Junwu started his translation; in the history of modern Arabic letters, Husayn is widely seen as one of the most important exemplars and partisans of *fuṣḥa* in the twentieth century, a writer who did not need to "translate" himself from colloquial Egyptian into *fuṣḥa*, but who used the formal written language effortlessly (Haeri 2003: 110; Allen 2010: 148–49). In *The Future of Culture in Egypt* – a book that Ma Junwu referenced in his preface – Husayn argued that colloquial Arabic "lack[ed] the qualities to make it worthy of the name of a language" (1954: 86–90).

Despite the idea, expressed in many different intellectual communities, that China and Egypt faced similar or analogous historical and civilizational problems, at the moment of Ma Junwu's translation it seems that the conceptual, political, and institutional underpinnings of the *baihua* vernacular had already rendered the stylistic choices of writers like Husayn incommensurable with a project of modernizing the Chinese language. Even after Ma Junwu invokes Lu Xun, one choice that seems unavailable to him is the strategy of so-called stiff translation (*ying yi*) that Lu Xun used in many of his translations from the Japanese. Stiff translation attempted to follow closely the word order and argumentation of the source text and used a difficult, at times impenetrable, combination of classical and vernacular Chinese – a style that, in Lu Xun's own words, was designed to make the reader uncomfortable.[20] In recent years, scholars have praised Lu Xun's style of stiff translation as an attempt to unsettle the Chinese language and open space for new ideas and modes of expression.

20 The term *ying yi* has also been rendered as "hard translation." See Lu Xun 1980.

The choices made in stiff translation resonate with the choices laid out in Schleiermacher's formulation of whether the translator should bring the reader closer to the text or the text closer to the reader.[21] Yet this choice seems ill-suited to Ma Junwu's practice as a translator if he is to serve the goal of presenting Taha Husayn as a world author in the same category as Tagore, for example, or if he is to promote translation for the sake of solidarity among the colonized and demonstrate that aspects of Egyptian literature had converged with Chinese literature. Ma's status as an ethnic and religious minority only complicated matters further.

Since no first version of the manuscript is to be found, we cannot compare further. Despite this limitation in available sources, the evidence we do have shows how questions and problems within the so-called source text – the limits of literacy and the limits of what might be portrayed by literary writing – take shape in translation in new and significant ways. Ma Junwu's translation and critique prefigure the Bandung moment in terms of how they imagined connections between different parts of the world. Nonetheless, Ma Junwu also offered a *belated* comparison between May Fourth iconoclasts and Taha Husayn. The moment in which Taha Husayn's work might have carried such significance as works of anti-traditional iconoclasm had already passed. Moreover, the devastation of the Second Sino-Japanese War and the accompanying disruption of elite intellectual life and popular culture made some of the May Fourth Movement's ideas about social and cultural reform seem unsuited to the time or at least in need of substantial rethinking.

Ma Junwu's *Recollections of Childhood* may even harbor a certain kind of nostalgia for imagining connections between China and the Middle East that by 1947 had already passed from the realm of possibility. As a member of the diplomatic corps, he surely felt the uncertainty over how relations between Asia and Africa, China and the Middle East would take shape after the conclusion of world war. The very nature of his own political status as a Muslim from the Republic of China had been called into question by repeated attempts by both Japan and the ROC to exert influence over Chinese Muslims in support of either dividing China or maintaining the Republic of China as a diverse conglomeration of peoples, languages, and religions (Mao 2011). The geopolitical instability of these times ensured that any attempt to theorize the relationship between China and Egypt risked being rendered irrelevant overnight. Even so, the materials and ideas that Ma Junwu engaged with seemed to demand the work of comparison, no matter how short-lived. Like his other

21 For one discussion, see Wang Pu 2013.

colleagues from China who studied at Azhar, his translation attempted to capture the possibilities for imagining the shared struggles of intellectuals in Egypt and China in the first half of the twentieth century.

Appendix

أقبلت بوادر هذا العيد، وأصبحت الطفلة ذات يوم في شئ من الفتور والهمود لم يكد يلتفت إليه أحد. والأطفول في القرى ومدن الأقاليم معرضون لهذا النوع من الإهمال، ولا سيما إذا كانت الأسرة كثيرة العدد، وربة البيت كثيرة العمل. ولنساء القرى ومدن الأقاليم فلسفة آثمة وعلم ليس أقل منها إثما. يشكو الطفل، وقلما تعني به أمه، واي طفل لا يشكو؟ إنما هو يوم وليلة ثم يفيق ويبلّ.

Taha Husayn, Al-Ayyām*, in* al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah*, I: 118*

The preliminaries of the feast were at hand, and one morning the child was somewhat languid and out of sorts, but no one paid him any attention. The children of the villages and towns of the provinces are exposed to this kind of neglect, particularly if the family is numerous and the mistress of the house has much work to do. For the women of the villages and towns of the provinces have a criminal philosophy and a knowledge that is no less criminal. The child complains and the mother seldom takes any notice. What child does not complain? It is only a matter of a day and a night and then it gets over and recovers.

Translation modified from Husayn, *The Days*, 71.

這天雖然新年的徵兆已顯，但是孩子卻變成一個疲乏潦倒的人了。他遭遇這樣危急的症候，簡直沒一人注意而加以療治。鄉村的婦人，有一種卑賤的哲學和愚頑的知識，他們依靠這種信心，所以孩子初病時，雖這樣嚴重，母親卻漠然置之，誰個孩子吃了五穀不生毛病，只須一日一夜就全愈。

On this day, although the New Year was approaching, the child became a person who was abnormally weary. Even when enduring such dangerous symptoms, not a single person noticed or tried to treat him at all. Women in the countryside have a kind of mean and low philosophy and ignorant, stubborn knowledge. They held to their conviction [in these beliefs], and thus when the child first became ill, despite its severity, his mother paid no attention to it. If a child doesn't get sick, then he's not a child, all it needs is a night and a day to heal. (From Ma Junwu 1940b: 11–12)

這一天雖是過新年，但是孩子卻疲倦不堪，他遭遇這種眼痛的急症，卻沒有人注意他，鄉村的婦人有一種淺薄的知識，認爲誰個孩子喫了五穀不生毛病，衹須衹須一日一夜就全愈。

Although this was the day to mark the New Year, the child was exhausted. Even when he showed such dangerous symptoms as pain in his eyes, no one paid attention to him. Women in the countryside have only superficial

knowledge, and [they] believe that if a child doesn't get sick, then he's not a child, all it needs is a night and a day to heal. (From Ma Junwu 1947: 5–6)

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28

The Avant-Garde Journal between Maghreb and Levant

ANNE-MARIE MCMANUS

The 1960s saw the rise and fall of avant-garde movements in the Maghreb and Levant, headily celebrating the achievements of political decolonization and announcing the work of "cultural decolonization" to come (see Laâbi 1966). The form of choice for these movements and their affiliated writers was the journal (*majala*): mobile, open to multiple genres, and capable of being produced on low budgets. Its regional center was Beirut, the heart of Arabic print culture (alongside Cairo), from which journals traveled to the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa, the Gulf, and the rest of the Levant. As this chapter will demonstrate, at distant poles of the region – Morocco, Algeria, and Iraq – avant-garde writers initiated dialogues with Beirut, a hub for emerging cross-regional practices. The resulting networks of translation constitute an emergent world-system in Arabic, with distinctive forms and deployments of what Emily Apter dubs untranslatability.

Two figures of the poet-translator will guide our discussion of two avant-garde movements, contemporaries of the late 1960s who, to this author's knowledge, were then unknown to one another but who met on the pages of Beirut-based literary journals. Each launched his literary career in the 1960s avant-garde, and for each, translation was a crucial aesthetic, political, and ethical practice – both then and in subsequent decades.

Abdellatif Laâbi, a Moroccan poet, critic, and translator, edited the Marxist-Leninist avant-garde journals *Souffles-Anfas* (1966–71) until his imprisonment by the state. Laâbi's "translational activism" brought Levantine poetics into Maghrebi print culture and into French; less well known are his collaborative translations of his own work into Arabic, published in Beirut (Harrison 2016a). His translations sought to infuse Arabic poetics with an aesthetics of embodied revolt and establish a literature "independent of both French and Arabic canons" (Harrison 2016b: 11) This new poetry would, for Laâbi, render the motion of popular movements that, after decolonization,

were exploding between the Maghreb and Levant. His translations from Arabic emphasized their violence on the French language, targeting legacies of orientalist representation, rendering visible to readers in the Maghreb the vitality of contemporary poetics, and debunking claims that Arabic was a dead language of tradition. His collaborative translations *into* Arabic, in contrast, projected the Maghrebi avant-garde into Levantine print culture with minimal translational violence, underscoring linguistic and aesthetic affinities across the Maghreb–Levant axis.

Sargon Boulus was the most prominent Iraqi poet and translator associated with the "60s generation" (*jil al-sitinat*); he left Iraq for Beirut in 1967 and settled in San Francisco in 1969, writing and translating prolifically until his death in 2007. In the 1960s, Boulus was translating across works by Ho Chi Minh, Jon Steinbeck, and Luigi Pirandello (al-Shawaf 2006). Thereafter, his translational scope (via the intermediary of English) included works from Polish, German, Japanese, English, Swedish, Chinese, Greek, French, and Spanish poetry, a world literature he used to "develop poetic language in Arabic" (Antoon 2017: 318; see also Boulus 1992). This range refracts into Boulus's concept of Arabic as "oceanic in nature": the language

> can absorb anything into its vast genetic pool, which goes back to the first languages of Mesopotamia, where writing itself was invented. The purists who claim that Arabic is a perfect, even divine, language are religious fundamentalists who refuse to admit its origins in Akkadian, Aramaic, and Syriac. But I think the time has finally come to treat Arabic as a great reservoir, a live magnet that can absorb foreign influences today as easily as it did in the past. (Boulus cited in al-Shawaf 2006)

Boulus used translation to renew the expansive depths of this oceanic Arabic, which carries without absorbing the traces of myriad influences, historic and contemporary.

Whether global or regional, these translational practices aimed to free written Arabic from the pieties of religion, conservatism, and the claims of states that staked their legitimacy on stewardship of Arab identity. However, in one, a global poetics restores to Arabic its polyglot origins and open borders. In another, a Maghreb–Levant axis privileges the movement of poetics across Arabic and French, with a new practice of translation into French serving as the faithful mirror of the center's – that is, Beirut's – poetic language and form. The Maghreb–Levant comparative frame developed here thus refuses a superficial comparison across peripheral, multilingual contexts.

As they converged in Beirut, the Arabic-language avant-gardes of Morocco and Iraq instantiated untranslatability in texts, commentaries on language, and the very notion of worldliness for Arabic literature.

These convergences also track networks that met in Beirut, home to the era's most prestigious journals: *al-Adab*, edited by Lebanese writer Suhayl Idris; *Mawaqif*, edited by Syrian-Lebanese poet Adonis; and *Shi'r*, edited by Adonis and Lebanese poet Yusuf al-Khal. In the present chapter, Adonis plays a prominent role in orchestrating networks, publications, translations, and reviews. Still, like many "little magazines," the journals discussed here did not move uninhibited across space, facing a lack of a publishing infrastructure to connect Tangier to Beirut, Beirut to Baghdad – let alone Tangier to Baghdad (Bulson 2016). Indeed, several of the avant-garde writers discussed wrote with concern about the absence of networks connecting Maghreb and Levant, envisioning their practices as the foundations of new, transregional Arabic literatures.

Souffles-Anfas

Run out of Laâbi's apartment in Tangier, *Souffles* was a self-funded venture with, initially, a Third-Worldist vision. Drawing contributions from Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian authors, its early issues also published translations dealing with political struggles in Central and Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and China. However, the defeat of Arab forces in 1967 initiated a series of statements asserting the group's participation in the leftist Arabic avant-garde. The collective began to publish bilingual issues that placed texts in French alongside literature and criticism in Arabic and translations of Arabic texts into French. One such was a French translation of Adonis's manifesto on the June 5th defeat in early 1968 (Harrison 2016b). A special issue in 1969 on the Palestinian Revolution appeared in separate versions in French and Arabic, declaring the reorientation of the group to the Levant. In 1971, the *Souffles* collective founded an Arabic-language sister journal, *Anfas*. The founding of this journal, Laâbi wrote, signaled a new era in Maghrebi culture: one of exchange and debate in progressive thought between Maghreb and Levant. "Centered on national and Arab realities," Laâbi explains, *Anfās* continued "the national combat" of cultural decolonization "and at the same time" brought about "confrontation and dialogue between progressive Moroccan thought and the movement for liberation and social struggle in other Arab countries" (Laâbi 1971a).

More than any other contributor to *Souffles-Anfas*, Laâbi used translation to substantiate this dialogue across the region. It was not enough to announce a new era in Arabic thought; cultural decolonization must also be borne out in literature. Laâbi's most sustained commentary on this point appears in his introduction to an anthology of Palestinian poetry he translated in the late 1960s, published in 1970 as *La Poésie palestinienne de combat*, featuring works by poets recently discovered in the Levant: Mahmud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim, Fadwa Tuqan, and others. Laâbi's introduction is an effusive polemic, celebrating their renewal of Arabic poetry's ties to oral literature and popular memory. Palestinian combat poetry, he writes, "is there to show us that poetry is capable of capturing the movement of a language and a national culture" (Laâbi 1971a: 62). In the people's resistance, he argues, old words take on new meanings and genres are transformed. Laâbi is inspired by Frantz Fanon, who, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, described the transfiguration of culture in popular struggles as "that zone of hidden fluctuation where the people can be found, for let there be no mistake, it is here that their souls are crystallized and their perception and respiration transfigured" (1963: 163). For Laâbi, the rendering of this bodily transfiguration in poetry allows the Palestinian poets to perform "a subversion within Arabic poetry, within Arabic literature, within Arabic culture" (Laâbi 1971a: 62).

Laâbi calls for a new translational practice between Arabic and French to draw out this subversion:

> We have tried, in this work, to call into question a certain tradition that has dominated French translations of Arabic poetry. Therefore we have not tried to "reconstruct a particular atmosphere" or a "unique rhythm" [like] those who wish to move an amateur public with local color and folklore . . . The public that can legitimately claim Palestinian combat poetry will not be esteemed Orientalist society, so taken with the eternal vibrations of the "Arab soul." (1971a: 31)

Against this orientalist tradition, Laâbi announces a rushed translation that struggles to keep up with the political present: a counter-archive based in a new reading of the pre-Islamic.[1] "Following the example of the pre-Islamic Arab poetesses," Laâbi writes, new poets are "howling once again in the face of the enemy" (28). Laâbi rips pre-Islamic poetry, foundation of the Arabic poetic tradition and standard for linguistic excellence, out of the classical

1 "We were not interested in assembling an encyclopedic repertoire that could satisfy the archeological tastes of a scholar on the hunt for an original argument, or in completing the archives of international organizations that have claimed for themselves the right to the memory of peoples" (1971a: 30).

tradition to foreground an alternative origin in oral, popular literature. We find the same concept in Laâbi's 1967 poem "Race," which addresses the Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum, wildly popular across the region in the 1960s: "the Nile and dams / your pyramids and our pyramids are the anthem of masses with empty stomachs / the hearts of coming centuries / mad love/ the *muʿallaqāt* of the Fourth Age" (Laâbi 1968). Turning east, Laâbi's poetic voice likens popular Egyptian song, anthems of contemporary masses that spread along regional radio waves, to the pre-Islamic odes (*muʿallaqāt*).

As Olivia Harrison has noted, Laâbi's translations of Palestinian poetry from Arabic echo his descriptions of "linguistic terrorism" in his French-language poetry, which, in Laâbi's rendering, sought "to break at all levels (syntax, phonetics, morphology, graphics, symbols, etc.) the original logic of the French language" (Laâbi 1970b: 36).[2] In his commentaries on his translations, Laâbi argues that the Palestinian poets perform such violence on *Arabic* poetics and thus require a new translational practice into French. Yet Laâbi's is an exaggerated claim in relation to the Palestinian corpus.[3] Rather, it is in Arabic-language contributions to *Souffles*' bilingual issues that we find a linguistic terrorism in Arabic, frequently in an effort to root literature in everyday life and its sounds, objects, and rhythms. In Arabic such gestures are typically associated with the use of dialect over *fusha*: standardized, written Arabic. This division tends to make dialect a placeholder for all the things that written Arabic, purportedly, cannot express: orality, the popular, the everyday. However, the capacity of *written* Arabic to convey such things was precisely what was at stake for Laâbi and others: on the one hand, to counter claims that written Arabic in the Maghreb was the language of tradition, religion, and authenticity and on the other, to make possible a dialogue in Arabic beyond the Maghreb. Thus, in the Maghrebi Arabic-language poetics in *Souffles-Anfas*, we find linguistic and aesthetic experiments that break the norms of written Arabic but are not reducible to the use of dialect. Arabic-language poet and *Souffles* contributor Bensalem Himmich, for example, introduces uses of the Moroccan *shkun* ("who") instead of the standardized

2 "Laâbi's description of terrorist literature could equally well apply to the Palestinian poetry collected in his anthology" where the Arabic language becomes "a hegemonic language that must be transformed to allow for the emergence of a new revolutionary voice" (Harrison 2016a: 54).

3 The Palestinian poets use *fusha* and, primarily, free verse forms that had been in circulation in Levantine print culture for almost two decades. Laâbi's descriptions, rather, target the union of poetic language and political engagement in the corpus, which weaves a Palestinian national cause, its history and myths, through poetics that depict the everyday.

mun into his poems, which are nevertheless characterized by a complex and at times cryptic use of formal register.[4] Hassan Mufti, whose contributions to *Souffles* 12 are announced as dialectal poetry, uses a good deal of *fusha*, employing dialect as a typographical signal to elongate and truncate sounds and introduce a distinct rhythm to the text (Moufti 1968). For example, in "Kalima" ("Word"), Mufti drops vowels – the preposition *fi* ("in") becomes the letter *f* – which speeds the elision between words, and elongates other parts of speech in short, rhythmic, occasionally rhymed lines.[5] The poem thus echoes spoken patterns as it meditates on the power of words, "a merciless new god" in the text; more meaningful than drawing a line between dialect and *fusha* here is the poet's use of sound and rhythm to disrupt the creeping authoritarianism of language that the text depicts (Moufti 1968).

A similar concern with words and sounds appears in Muhammad al-Habib al-Zanad's *Ma' wa-Tin* ("Water and Clay)", a poem in three scenes that appeared in *Souffles* 13–14 in 1969 (al-Zanad 1969). He uses short phrasing (the lines average two–three words each) and emphasizes everyday objects and animals, as well as their colors and materials. These, supported by repetitions, lend the poem a simple musicality: "Under a wooden chair / are wooden planks / wounded wood / firewood." The poetic voice wanders through free association to a reference to Abu Lahab, whose wife threw firewood in the path of the Prophet, then interrupts itself – "But. / [. . .] Let's go back to what we were saying" – and returns to the chair, now sheltering a soldier who was in Vietnam. The second scene moves to a tavern – "bottles, bottles, bottles" – where the alcohol is aurally likened to animals; crying out next to cheeping birds; braying donkeys; cawing owls. This sonar menagerie uses verbs specific to each animal sound and creates a rhyme scheme that, in a poke at classical form, falls inside lines and at their traditional end. All this, we are playfully reminded, is "words and words and words" strung out like prose.[6] His opponents, "guardians of signs," will say his verse is not metered; still, it has a melody (*lahn*), but it is not a song because it cannot be set to music (*talhin*), which makes it *malhun* – that is, colloquial verse (al-Zanad 1969: 36). These are unclassifiable words "of water and clay," taking on a life

4 Outside *Souffles*, Himmich used experiment with color, handwriting, and inverted passages to defamiliarize reading Arabic. He continued this materialist impulse in the calligraphy movement of the 1970s and early 1980s.

5 For example, the pronoun *hu* ("his") becomes the letter *waw,* a long vowel at the end of the word. Like Himmich, Moufti also uses "shkun" (1968).

6 The scattering of words in prose (*nathr*) in Arabic is classically opposed to poetry, which orders words like pearls on a string.

of their own and spreading "revolution and madness" – a ludic linguistic terrorism (36).

These irreverent poetics in *Souffles-Anfas* self-consciously broke taboos around the writing of Arabic, contesting, in parallel with Laâbi's translations, the association between *fusha* and authority – both religious and political – in the Maghreb. In the 1960s, the Moroccan state was introducing Arabization in education; although this policy bore out the anticolonial movement's popular reclamation of the Arabic language, the state's implementation was uneven and unequal, entrenching social and political inequalities in Moroccan society. By the mid-1960s, the Moroccan opposition, notably the student movement and the left – of which *Souffles-Anfas* was a prominent voice in the late 1960s and early 1970s – took to the streets in protest. They met with harsh repression from the Hassan II monarchy. It was in this context of protest that *Souffles-Anfas* was shut down in 1972.

Nonviolent Translation: Laâbi and *Mawaqif*

Adonis's founding of *Mawaqif* had been celebrated in *Souffles* as a kindred literary-critical response to 1967 that embraced politics and critique alongside literature, theorizing a new mode of avant-garde writing in Arabic. In 1969, the "Cultural Information" section of *Souffles* noted that Adonis had initiated "an exchange and collaboration" between the journals, and the following year *Souffles* featured a "Note on Adonis" celebrating the poet's "total commitment."[7] Beginning in the fifth issue of *Mawaqif,* in 1969, contributions from *Souffles* affiliates began to appear in the Lebanese journal: Mohammed Berrada, Muhammad Zafzaf, Abdallah Laroui, and Laâbi. In May/June of 1971, *Mawaqif* ran an interview with Laâbi that introduced readers to the *Anfas* project; no mention is made of the journals' conflict with the Moroccan state (al-Zamrani 1971).

This exchange took place in a broader context of interaction between Moroccan authors and regional print culture.[8] During its short run, *Anfas* published Maghrebi authors alongside writers from across the Arabic-speaking world, such as Sudanese poet Muhammad al-Fayturi, who had

7 "The Lebanese poet Adonis has recently founded in Beirut a journal called *Mawaqif* (Positions). Four issues of this journal have already appeared. Adonis recently wrote to *Souffles* to organize an exchange and collaboration between the two journals." "Informations Culturelles."

8 Berrada and Zafzaf published in Idris's *al-Adab* in this same period, for example. Non-*Souffles* contributors from Morocco also contributed to *Mawaqif*, such as the poet Mohammed Bennis.

gained regional prominence as a contributor to Idris's *al-Adab*. Evidence that the *Anfas* editorial team was soliciting contributions from across the region appears in the "Letters from Readers" section, where the editorial team notes messages from writers in Egypt, Iraq, Bahrain, and Sudan.[9] *Souffles-Anfas* embraced *Mawaqif* in the same period the latter was hosting special issues on the Palestinian cause and interviewing novelist Ghassan Kanafani on recently discovered resistance literature in Palestine (i.e., Laâbi's combat poets); publishing reviews of avant-garde manifestos in Iraq (see below); and hosting debates on the state of Lebanese universities.

It was in this setting that Laâbi translated "Race" in collaboration with Adonis. The poem appeared in *Mawaqif* in 1970, in *fusha* and translated as "Sulala," a term evoking lineage and descent, and with its subtitle "rihla shafawiyya" – an oral journey.[10] Despite its title, the poem does not take refuge in biological concepts of the lineage tying Maghreb and Levant. Rather, adopting a mythic persona, the poetic voice speaks in the name of an oppressed race ("l'enterrement de l'oppression historique de toute une race") instantiated in the pulsing, rising muscles of an Arab collective. Laâbi's style, marrying short declarations – anguished cries – with prose meditations, found a comfortable home on the pages of *Mawaqif*, which used textual placement and bold font to depict Laâbi's original in formations that echoed typographic experiments in Arabic poetry by Adonis. Laâbi's imagery is violent, bodily, and occasionally surrealist: "our eyes grow wider / Vast organ recording the apocryphal voices that canonize the jungle and scalping / our bodies / mishmash of traumas / of festering transplants / disorganized." Such images shift to accommodate translation into Arabic – the eyes bulge, scalping becomes the commonly used verb "slaughter," the voices are "distorted" rather than apocryphal – and their staccato is underscored as the translators repeat nouns to anchor dangling adjectives like "disorganized."[11]

That is, the translation does *not* perform linguistic terrorism within Arabic; the text's lexicon is complex and rich, but not alien to a reader of Levantine poetics. Nevertheless, the text signals its foreign origins through footnotes on Laâbi's local references: textbooks used in French colonial schools, the Agadir

9 On Egypt, Iraq, and Sudan, see *Anfas* 3–4 (1971): 61–62. From Bahrain, Qasim Haddad assures the team of the warm reception of *Anfas* and writes "I will do my best to send you something from the materials I have ready for publication" (*Anfas* 5 [1972]: 63).

10 "Sulala." This subtitle appears in the original French publication: *Race: Itinéraire oral* (1967).

11 This becomes "ajsad mutakhalkhala"; "Sulala," 144.

earthquake of 1961 ("Sulala," 146). We cannot, moreover, attribute the absence of linguistic terrorism to hegemonic norms exerted in Levantine print culture. Two years earlier, Bensalem Himmich had translated a section of *Race* with Laâbi, published in *Souffles* in 1968 under the title "Umm Kulthum and the Flood" (*Umm Kulthūm wa al-tufan*). The language of the text, laid out in a more conventional structure than the *Mawaqif* translation, is strikingly similar to the Arabic of the Laâbi–Adonis collaboration – harmoniously resonant with the poetics of Levantine print culture.

This resonance is unsurprising when we recall that Laâbi's concern in translating Arabic into French was to establish in the Maghreb the existence of precisely this poetic language and corpus: the Levantine avant-garde. His collaboration with Adonis reveals, however, an understudied moment in Maghrebi letters, when authors associated with the most radical forms of poetic experiment crafted literature in *fusha* via Beirut. The final section of this chapter returns to this point via the Algerian author Kateb Yacine; first, however, we turn to the other side of the region and Iraq's 1960s avant-garde.

The 60s Generation

On the pages of *Mawaqif*, the *Souffles-Anfas* movement stood alongside the 60s generation: a grouping of young writers and artists who shared a desire to break with previous generations and their aesthetic concerns, including the free verse movement of the 1950s. Prominent figures in this movement who published in *Mawaqif* include Jalil al-Qaysi, Anwar al-Ghassani, and Fadhil al-Azzawi, all associated with the so-called Kirkuk Group (*jama'at Kirkuk*). This refers to a group of writers from Kirkuk who migrated to Baghdad during the 1960s; they, and most prominently Boulus, exerted a significant aesthetic influence on the 60s generation.[12]

Boulus's global translational practice is reflected in the broader movement, which avidly consumed print culture from Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus, but also saw affinities between their rebellion and English and American poetry, as well as student movements in Paris, Prague, and San Francisco (see, e.g., Haydar 1992: 23; al-Azzawi 1997: 280). In Iraq, and particularly Kirkuk, writers encountered Kurdish, Turkish, Turkmen, Assyrian, and, due to the presence of the Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC), English. Azzawi notes that "everything published in Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, and Damascus got to Kirkuk, just

12 Boulus notes that Baghdad writers gave the name, with alienating implications for non-Arabs; al-Shawaf 2006.

as books of Turkish literature published in Istanbul and Ankara" found their way to the city; the American library housed English and American literature, and a Muslim Brotherhood library had extensive holdings in Arab-Islamic heritage (al-Azzawi 1997: 280). The Kirkuk press at the time included bilingual newspapers in Arabic/Turkish (*al-Afaq*), and Arabic/Kurdish (*al-Shafaq*). This multilingualism, deeply politicized in our post-2003 moment, in the 60s generation's corpus echoes Boulus's notion of oceanic Arabic, enriching the language and signaling its openness to global poetics.[13]

Boulus read widely in anglophone literature and began his translational practice by publishing in *al-ʻAmilun fi-al-Naft* (Oil Workers), the IPC journal, before contributing to the prestigious Beirut journal *Shiʻr*, edited by Yusuf al-Khal and Adonis. After smuggling himself out of Iraq in 1967, the young poet went to Beirut, where he used the library at the American University to access reviews like *The New American Poetry* and *Evergreen Review* and to publish translations of the Beats (Ginsberg, Snyder, McClure, and Ferlinghetti) in *Shiʻr*.[14] This journal was a mouthpiece of high formalism in a moment of calls for "commitment" in Arabic literature – more specifically, expectations that political commitment would be expressed in particular forms – and Boulus's association with *Shiʻr* has led to debate over whether he was an apolitical poet.[15] This debate reflects a critique of the 60s generation in Iraq, who were accused of coming under the influence of bourgeois culture, rejecting what al-Azzawi called "photographic" – that is, descriptive – political poetry.[16]

This rejection of dominant political form appears in a Poetic Manifesto, published in March 1969 with the inaugural issue of *Shiʻr 69* (Poetry 69), that states, "the good (political) poet isn't the one writing political statements attacking the enemy or praising those who fight for the triumph of a creed or idea" (al-Azzawi 1997: 321).[17] Rather, the poet must "overcome his political allegiance of the moment for a wider allegiance, for all generations" such that

13 We should not draw superficial comparisons between multilingualism in the Maghreb and Iraq. As Boulus noted in 2006, as Iraqi national identity is fractured around sect/ethnicity after years of war and US occupation, the names of writers like himself have been "dragged into the blind, ignorant, brutal struggle for power" in Iraq; al-Shawaf 2006.

14 He also translates Etel Adnan, who had facilitated contact between Adonis and the *Souffles-Anfas* movement; she would help Boulus get to San Francisco.

15 For a review and a position in this debate, see Antoon 2015.

16 On accusations against the 60s generation, see Azzawi 1997: 7; Azzawi goes to some lengths to distinguish them from *Shi'r*; see 167–69.

17 The Manifesto was signed by al-Azzawi (primary author), along with Sami Mehdi, Khalid Ali Mustafa, and Fawzi Karim.

he becomes "a witness to the movement of history and the world" (321). The poet's revolutionary potential lies in revealing the human aspects of his nation and people, making him a "progressive revolutionary waging continual battles" against "slavery, exploitation, and bureaucracy" (330).

In line with this universalist impulse, the Manifesto refers to the Western humanistic tradition (e.g., Dante) and translates from Cuban poetry and the *Upanishads*. The Manifesto uses translations of the latter to articulate a new vision of "poetry's domain" as "a desert, invisible to others" that causes "temporalities [to be] woven across the void [*al-faragh*]" (al-Azzawi 1997: 319). This language draws from the Hindu sage Yajnavalkya's dialogue with a woman philosopher, Gargi, who asks him "across what is the ethereal expanse woven?" Yajnavalkya's answer is "the imperishable," which the Manifesto renders as *al-lafani*, evoking the Sufi concept of *al-fana'*, often translated as the passing-away of the self. However, the text is at pains to emphasize it is not introducing "a new Sufism" because the new poetry seeks to remain rooted "in the harshest realities of life" (319). The Manifesto thus underscores the foreignness of *The Upanishads*, insisting on the presence of an untranslatable to carve out a new relation between politics and poetry.

In a 1969 issue of *Mawaqif*, Adonis announced the launch of *Shi'r 69,* heralding it as "a unique phenomenon in Iraqi poetry" (Adonis 1969). For Adonis, the Manifesto defended poetics and exploded both "the material past" passed down by tradition and "the mental past," embodied in "a fear of the future" (152). The Manifesto signals a break, explains Adonis, with the "traditionalist spirit" of Iraqi poetry, as well as a more recent "realist tendency" (152). In this, Adonis makes overt the Manifesto's opposition to the call for commitment that had been in vogue in Levantine print culture since the 1950s and that, in the late 1960s, the Iraqi state was beginning to adopt as its official culture.[18] That is, the Manifesto rejected established models of political engagement, including party affiliations with the Arab left, and used a global corpus to infuse radical newness – aesthetically *and* politically – into Arabic poetics at a moment when the state was increasingly concerned with making literature support "the revolution."

Shi'r 69 was short-lived, publishing four issues before the journal was closed by the order of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council. It did not feature the work of all authors in the 60s generation, nor was it the only Iraqi

18 Al-Azzawi describes a relative weakness in state control over culture that permits the 60s generation to flourish after the 1963 coup that brought down Ba'ath rule. The end of this period, in his narrative, is the declaration of the National Front between the Ba'ath state and the Iraqi Communist Party in the early 1970s.

journal that was considered home to their work. The journal is not held in a public archive or available in digital archives.[19] Indeed, it was by entering the pages of *Mawaqif* that *Shi'r 69* entered a broader Arabic corpus, leaving an enduring trace of this avant-garde movement. The other primary journals associated with the 60s generation were Iraqi and rarely circulated beyond its borders: *Alif Ba'*, edited by al-Azzawi after the closure of *Shi'r 69*, and *al-Kalima*, based out of Najaf. For al-Azzawi, the lack of mobility to Iraqi journals was a stumbling block, reflective of the material risks (notably prison) and publishing obstacles that Iraqi writers faced in comparison to their peers in Lebanon, where journals profited from a liberal political climate and regional circulation networks (al-al-Azzawi 1997: 169). In contrast, he writes, "the papers and journals we worked for were local and didn't go farther than the Iraqi border" (169). For Boulus, however, the isolation and conservatism of Iraqi cities like Kirkuk and Najaf, cut off from regional networks, made fertile grounds for radical creativity (Boulus 1992: 40).

Untranslatability and Translation

It is perhaps tempting to linger over similarities between the 60s generation and *Souffles-Anfas*. Both movements advocated, in multilingual contexts, the radical creativity and independence of poetic language. Both were censored; some of their writers imprisoned or forced into exile. Yet the networks tracked here introduce much-needed friction to the purported uniformity of Arabic literature, or indeed its avant-gardes, as well as to the bland regional catch-all of the "Middle East" – an expression that risks reproducing imperial and neo-imperial geographies. As Emily Apter has argued, comparative literature can be "case-sensitive and site-specific" by turning to "translational transnationalism" – that is, by attending to translation in its many forms and implications, from textual practice to the endangerment of translators to language extinction (Apter 2008). The Maghreb–Levant axis of this chapter emerges, in this light, as a translational world-system distinctive to Arabic poetics in the decades after decolonization – a system that bears its own untranslatables: that "kernel of 'the foreign' that remains, an ineffable textual essence only realizable in the translational afterlife" (Apter 2008: 584). As I have attempted to show, the untranslatables of Arabic in this system have distinctive and historically contingent meanings. For Boulus and the 60s

19 The Manifesto is reprinted in al-Azzawi's *al-Rūḥ*; hints as to the content of *Shi'r 69* can be found in texts by 60s authors in the German-based journal *Faradis*' 1992 special issue.

generation, translation and its foreign traces signified an oceanic globality of Arabic that holds but does not absorb difference, permitting the articulation of new relations between poetics and politics. For Laâbi, Arabic's untranslatables in French were weapons to deploy in the struggle to forge a new Arabic canon. However, this untranslatability operated as a one-way street in his practice, for when it came to translating his own poetry into Arabic, Laâbi adopted the norms of Levantine poetics – that is, he used *fusha*. This point is relevant for Maghrebi literature because the avant-garde of *Souffles-Anfas*, as well as other authors, is associated with the linguistic terrorism, which is, in turn, linked to the rejection of standardized Arabic: the language of the state, of Islam, and their marriage in the patriarchal authoritarianism of postcolonial politics. Within the world-system of Arabic traced here, however, we glimpse other, fleeting practices around *fusha* and translation.

Algerian writer Kateb Yacine was a leading figure of the independence generation who, in 1970, abandoned French to write in dialectal Arabic (Gafaïti 2002: 25–26). His resulting corpus is understudied for reasons of language and accessibility.[20] Yacine's embrace of dialect is widely understood as a rejection of the language the Algerian state imposed in education, administration, and public space after independence under so-called Arabization. His turn toward dialect and oral performance can thus be seen to perform the opposition between *fusha* and dialect depicted in *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985), the influential novel by Yacine's contemporary Assia Djebar, who reclaims oral Arabic as the medium of a polyvocal, feminist history repressed first by France and subsequently by the postcolonial state. Echoing this, Yacine's plays are overtly concerned with popular history and used dialect to "reach the whole [Algerian] public," in Yacine's words, "the people" (Casas 1998: 99). Like Boulus, Yacine did not seek to have his works translated into a "world" language, eschewing a glittering worldly career to focus on a more local and challenging – materially and politically – context that his plays connect to global concerns of the period.[21]

Yacine's *L'Homme aux sandales de caoutchouc* (1970a) emerged from the writer's travel to Vietnam in the late 1960s, which solidified his notion of theater as a vehicle for popular history (Casas 1998: 99).[22] A "vast fresco on the Vietnamese resistance," the play spans multiple centuries in Vietnam – the site of perpetually renewed popular resistance to oppressors, whether Chinese, French, or American – and pans across Israel–Palestine and the

20 Much of the corpus is lost; see Casas 1998.
21 On material difficulties, see Casas 1998: 96–98; on language, 101.
22 For this reason Yacine saw scenes and presentation in constant flux.

United States (Moura 2013: 121). The text appeared in its French version with Seuil in 1970 and was performed the following year in Lyon in French and in Algiers in dialect. Accounts of the performances suggest the author was unhappy with the Arabic translation because it was too literary and saw the French production as heavy-handed on politics (121).[23] Whatever the case, Yacine thereafter produced plays in dialect for performance primarily in Algeria, eschewing the regional circulation of Arabic-language print culture as well as global circuits of the French language.[24]

Naqqala li-thalathat junud (*A Stretcher for Three Soldiers*), a section of *L'Homme aux sandales de caoutchouc,* appeared in *Mawaqif* in 1970 – the same issue as Laâbi's "Sulala." Yacine's collaboration with the journal emerged from a series of exchanges between 1962 and the early 1970s, predating his embrace of dialect. In this period, Yacine published edited versions of works in progress in *fusha* in *Mawaqif*, *Shi'r*, and *al-Adab*, edited by Yusuf al-Khal (not to be confused with Idris's *al-Adab*; Creswell 2019 46–47) Yacine was also an advisory editor to Khal's journal in the early 1960s.[25] I read these exchanges as evidence of a short period of openness toward a Maghrebi literature in *fusha* that, like Laâbi's, relied on translational collaborations with the Levant and that suspended, briefly, the binaries of postcolonial Maghrebi language politics that had taken definitive shape by the early 1970s.

Like the French play, *Stretcher* poses a transhistorical vision of Vietnamese resistance but narrows *L'Homme*'s global scale. The play carefully introduces concepts of world history, with monologues by French and Chinese rulers, a chorus, and narrator (*rawi*) detailing the imbrication of colonialism, capitalism, and cultural domination that "paves the way for the colonial empire" that spread across "the Antilles, Senegal, Madagascar, Morocco, and Algeria" (Yacine 1970b: 15). In asides absent from the French play, the narrator charts the movement of missionaries, bureaucratic reports, and armies that underlies this new world order, in which "Europe was the center of the world" (Yacine 1970b: 15; contrast Yacine 1970a: 19–20). These aspects of *Stretcher* sketch a Eurocentric colonial order that connected Maghreb and Levant, the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa. The text entered Levantine print culture at a moment of interest in Southeast Asia as a transcolonial site of insurgent

23 Ben Guettaf translated the text into Arabic.

24 Although Yacine did not aim to translate his works, an exception was *Muhammad prends ta valise*, which addressed migrant workers in France.

25 His texts were translated by Adonis, Lebanese poet Ounsi al-Haj, and "the editorial family" of *Mawaqif*. In 1962, he published Arabic translations of his play *La Femme sauvage* in two separate texts with *Shi'r* and Khal's *al-Adab*.

leftism.[26] The play was unique, however, in seeking to embody on stage abstract mechanisms of world history, panning across "different geographical regions" through reference to "structures, simultaneities, and interrelations" (Shih 2013: 82).[27]

The nation, however, frames *Stretcher*'s polyvocal, feminist vision of Vietnam's revolt by introducing, in rapid succession, uprisings against foreign invaders, French and Chinese, who ally with local feudal powers. This historical panorama spans "the first century" to the reign of Louis XVI of France, when three brothers lead a rebellion against the colonial-capitalist-religious alliance represented in dialogues between Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and the King of Cochinchine (Shih 2013: 10). One of the brothers, Quang Trung, suggests the strategy that gives the Arabic text its name, underscoring solidarity and ingenuity among the people: the Vietnamese people will move to the front using stretchers: "We will advance quickly, but with easy steps. Every man who tires of walking will take his share of rest, carried by two others on the stretcher" (19).

The projection of global and national histories in *Stretcher*'s content should not distract us from its material and translational participation in a Maghreb–Levant literary system. As translation, *Stretcher* developed an emergent, indirect poetics of solidarity in *fusha* across these distant sites. These aesthetics relied on the networks authors put into place, traversing language and distance to briefly imagine shared phenomenologies of history and revolt. The disappearance of these Maghreb–Levant ties in *fusha* and their absence from literary memory attest, moreover, to broader untranslatabilities between these sites – most particularly between investments in the Arabic language.

These experiments in *fusha* in Maghrebi literature remind us that Arabic was an object of popular debate during the anticolonial movement and initial years of independence in the Maghreb. In Morocco's free school movement, grass-roots activists established schools that provided an Arabic-language alternative to Qur'ānic education, teaching "modern" standardized Arabic (Damis 1975). In Algeria's independence movement, popular attachments to the Arabic language and Arabism mobilized

26 See, for example, *Mawaqif's* translation of a text by Stuart Schram and H. C. d'Encausse, published as a book under the Arabic title *Marxism Facing the Problems of the Revolution in the Non-European World*.

27 The only comparable playwright working in Arabic at this time was Syrian Saadallah Wannus, who shared Yacine's interest in history but did not adopt a global or transcolonial perspective.

Algerian nationalists (McDougall 2011). *Souffles-Anfas* defended such memories of the Arabic language in the late 1960s, calling on the state to implement egalitarian Arabic education. However, these attachments to Arabic shifted under repressive state language reforms of the independence era, notably Algeria, where the state violently imposed a monolingual cultural, religious, and political identity on a diverse, multilingual society (Gafaïti 2002: 26).

Although the translational openness of the 1960s and early 1970s was brought to a close, the traces of this short-lived world-system can be glimpsed in archives of print culture, as well as in subsequent gestures of translation, few of which are remarked in contemporary scholarship. After his release from prison in 1980, Laâbi continued to translate from Arabic into French, including Mahmud Darwish, Saadi Yusuf, Muhammad al-Maghut, and Hassan Hamdane, better known as Mehdi ʿAmel. These Levantine authors have various affiliations with the Arab left, and their poetics marry a critical rejection of tradition (in social-political values and poetic form) and a fluid use of *fusha* to render everyday experience. Their movement into French, albeit lacking the strident commentaries of the 1960s, thus echoes an earlier project of connecting Maghreb and Levant across languages, attesting to the vitality of radical Arabic poetics.

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29

The "Forgers" of World Literature: Translation, *Nachdichtung*, and Hebrew World Poetry

ADRIANA X. JACOBS

> It was very far away –
> In India or China,
> (and maybe it was in Berlin,
> in a café . . .
>
> —Leah Goldberg, "Porcelain Ballad"[1]

In 1975, the poet and editor Tuvia Ruebner published a collection of Hebrew translations of world poetry by the Hebrew poet Leah Goldberg (1911–71). Titled *Kolot rechokim u-krovim* (Voices Far and Near), this volume showcased Goldberg's impressive linguistic range and translation strategies. In his afterword, Ruebner describes the project as follows: "[This book's] purpose is to bring before the reader the latent negotiations that the poet conducted with poets far and near in time and place, with many different cultures, and her voice as well, which returns like an echo from the poems of others" (Goldberg 1975: 244). Although many of the poems had been translated from their original languages (German, French, English, Russian, Italian), a few – notably poems from the ancient world and the "Far East" (Japanese, Chinese) – were examples of "targum mi-targum," second-hand translations.

What stands out in Ruebner's assessment is the word "latent" (in Hebrew, *chabui*), a curious choice given that the translations themselves are entirely visible in the anthology at hand. Therefore, by "latent," he is referring to something other than the translations themselves, to the "negotiations" that Goldberg undertakes *within* the translations, and also within her own original poetry. Ruebner does not describe the nature of these negotiations – they are "latent," after all – but a sentence later, he observes that readers will find in

1 Goldberg [1973] 1998: 74. All translations from the Hebrew are mine unless otherwise noted.

this collection an "echo" of Goldberg's voice "return[ing] . . . from the poems of others" (Goldberg 1975: 244). Here, he acknowledges, as others have, the ways in which Goldberg consciously brought her own aesthetic preferences to bear on the poems that she translated. Goldberg herself argued that although poets made the best translators, they "hardly manage to refrain from imposing on it [their] own manner and style, and sometimes [their] own ideas" (Goldberg 1966a: 842–43). Such a translator was, in her words, a *metargem-yotser*, a translator-creator (Goldberg 1950: 31).

Goldberg's translations were also shaped by "latent negotiations" in another respect. For throughout her oeuvre, which spanned the better part of the twentieth century, one occasionally comes across poems for which no original exists, or poems that have been reworked so thoroughly that tracing them back to a source text proves daunting, if not impossible. Examples of the former were confirmed by Goldberg in her own lifetime, for instance, the sequence "Ahavata shel Tereza di Mon" (The Love of Teresa de Meun), for which Goldberg initially provided the fictional backstory that they were poems written by a twelfth-century aristocratic woman from Avignon.[2] Her 1966 anthology *Lu'ach ha-ohavim* (A Calendar for Lovers) contains a "French folk poem" that we now know Goldberg herself authored, though Ruebner (who may or may not have been aware of the conceit) includes it in *Kolot*.[3] In the case of Goldberg, tracing a translation back to a source may be complicated by the distortions that are introduced through intermediary translation (*tirgum metavekh*), but we also know that Goldberg drew her translations of Chinese and Japanese poetry from early twentieth-century German *Nachdichtungen*, translations that aspired to rework or "recreate" a poem in another language according to the spirit but not the letter of the original.[4]

Gideon Toury's definition of pseudotranslation as "texts which have been presented as translations with no corresponding source texts in other languages ever having existed" requires that the nonexistence of the source text be corroborated (1995: 40). But Toury's definition does not account for source texts that exhibit what Karen Emmerich has termed "textual instability" (2017: 9). Some of Goldberg's translations from the Chinese and Japanese

2 See my reading of these poems in Jacobs 2018: 117–30.

3 Goldberg 1966b: 127–28; 1975: 91. For an account of this episode, see Lieblich 1995: 215.

4 For example, I have not succeeded in locating the source texts for "Keshepakachti et eynai" (When I Opened My Eyes] by Lu Lei (possibly the early twentieth-century poet Li Lei) (Goldberg 1975: 20–21) or the eighth-century Tang poem to which Goldberg refers in her poem "Milim achronot" (Last Words) (Goldberg 1959: 243).

may not (yet) fall definitely into the category of pseudotranslation, but they certainly blur the line between original and translation in ways that allow for translation to assume the status of an original text, which is the case for her intermediary or second-hand translations.

In her work on pseudotranslation and other practices of fictional translation, Emily Apter assesses the implications of translating without originals, in her words, a form of "textual reproduction" that is not unlike cloning, "[growing] . . . anew from the cells of a morbid or long-lost original" (2005: 162). Translations for which a source text and author cannot be authenticated create, in Apter's words, "a situation in which the translation mislays the original, absconding to some other world of textuality that retains the original only as fictive pretext" (160). Comparing such practices of translation to cloning carries serious ramifications in literary cultures still invested in monolingual authority, as has been, and remains, the case for modern Hebrew literature in Israel/Palestine. The demand for a monolingual literary culture in pre-Statehood Palestine not only excluded other languages that were active in that period – Yiddish, German, and Arabic, to name a few – but also imposed the demand that Hebrew itself be stripped of its foreign influences.[5] Translation carries tremendous transgressive potential in such contexts because it acknowledges, imagines, and contrives affinities between authors and texts that can deregulate the borders of a national literary canon.[6] This "transgressive circulation" of translation, to borrow Johannes Göransson's term, also poses an ethical issue for contemporary scholars of translation and world literature (Göransson 2018). The languages and cultures that become the source for translation, and specifically creative translation practices like pseudotranslation, may revise literary maps in radical ways. At the same time, potentially problematic appropriations may very well underlie this activity. Noting that many of the translations he gathered date from the 1940s and 1950s, Ruebner ascribes to Goldberg's translation activity a "social invitation" (*hazmana sotsialit*) that he contextualizes specifically in the period of WWII and its aftermath. In essays like "Eiropa shelachem" (Your Europe), Goldberg openly mourned her generation's rupture from European culture and saw translation as a way to remain connected to its places and languages despite her profound sense of betrayal. But this activity also intersected powerfully with her critique of the post-1948

5 For a fuller analysis of the tension between this demand and the persistent multilingualism of Mandatory Palestine, see Halperin 2015.

6 I attend to this relation between poetry, translation, and canon formation in *Strange Cocktail* (Jacobs 2018).

hegemony of Hebrew literary culture and its repudiation of diasporic influence. Western European, Ashkenazi culture circumscribed Goldberg's diaspora, thereby privileging languages that were "near" to her cultural background – French, Russian, German – but left out Mizrachi and Sephardic languages, like Spanish and Arabic. For Goldberg, the Far East – *ha-mizrach ha-rachok* – and its poetry was fundamentally entangled with her European identity and her ambivalent wrestling with the very question of what it meant to be a European Jew in the 1930s and in the postwar period, and what it meant to be European in Jewish Palestine.[7] Where Goldberg located the Far East on her world literary map is one of the questions this chapter will raise in light of Hebrew literature's engagement with the Far East and the legacy of European Orientalism that informed its mapping.

Poetry typically tends to fall into the peripheries of contemporary world literary studies, including Hebrew and Yiddish, for reasons that I have discussed in my own work on Hebrew poetry and translation (Jacobs 2018: 23). The book market and prose economy are traceable in ways that privilege the format of the book, and therefore genres like the novel.[8] The more diffuse circulation of poems, both in print and through performance – as a single poem, radio recitation, or in the "profoundly hybrid" anthology – therefore presents practical and conceptual challenges to world literary studies.[9] In the twentieth century, the publication of anthologies of *shirat 'olam*, world poetry, certainly open a window into how modern Hebrew poets, readers, and poetry translators participated in a discourse on world literature, but a fuller study of *shirat 'olam* requires the inclusion of poems that did not find their way into a book. The final section of this chapter, for instance, will turn to translations by Goldberg that first (and in some cases, only) appeared in her published essays.

7 Although recorded as far back as the twelfth century, the term "Far East" circulated widely during the years of British colonialization, referring to British colonies east of India (though excluding Australia and New Zealand). Goldberg's use of the term is consistent with this practice, although it would begin to fall out of use in the 1960s.

8 In their article on Jewish literature as a "non-universal global," Lital Levy and Allison Schachter endeavor to use Jewish literature as a model for contemporary world literary study. They draw from a range of case studies in their work – from the French novel *Le Juif errant* (The Wandering Jew) by Eugène Sue to the Yiddish tales of Mendele Mokher Sforim (S. Y. Abramovitch). While they are right that tracking the translation and circulation of such texts places Jewish literatures in a more transnational frame, it is also not incidental that they focus primarily on the prose market, and specifically the novel (Levy and Schachter 2015).

9 I take the expression "profoundly hybrid" from Hannan Hever's (1997) article on Hebrew poetry anthologies, which I explore in a later section.

In the preface to his English translations of the Hebrew poet Avot Yeshurun, Harold Schimmel proposed that every poet fashions a poetic map from coordinates that do not always correspond to the real places in which poets live and work; rather, this map can – and often does – extend to accommodate imagined affiliations (Schimmel 1980: xx). In his work on the Hebrew *Haskala* (Enlightenment), Moshe Pelli addresses the oeuvre of the German Hebraist Isaac Satanow (1732–1804), who at one point composed a book of pseudo-biblical proverbs and claimed them to be the work of an ancient writer, whose works he had discovered. According to Pelli, this conceit did not sit well with some of Satanow's contemporaries, who labeled him a "forger." Pelli remarks, "We, students of world literature, however, know many other such 'forgers' who enriched world literature with similar artistic devices" (Pelli 2005: 26).[10] Beginning with a survey of *shirat 'olam*, and probing the currency this term accrued in the Hebrew literary economy of the early twentieth century, I will examine how poets like Goldberg "forge" – that is, make and fabricate – world literature in their own terms and through translation's "latent negotiations." As a collection that reflects Goldberg's interest in "poets far and near, in many times and places," *Kolot rechokim u-krovim* offers a model of *shirat 'olam*, world poetry, but also unsettles it through *Nachdichtung* and other practices of creative translation. What does Goldberg's world literary model tell us about the status and composition of "world" in twentieth-century Hebrew literature in general and Hebrew poetry in particular? Using Goldberg's transcreative translations of Chinese poetry as a case study, I will consider how practices of creative translation – like pseudotranslation and *Nachdichtung* – allow for a revisioning of the map of world literature, particularly in configurations of (Hebrew) world poetry and its oscillations between the national and the universal, the local and the translational.

Shirat 'olam / World Poetry

The *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, edited by Barbara Cassin, includes an entry for the Hebrew word *'olam*, world. There, Rémi Brague opens his definition of the term by placing it in a comparative philological context:

> Among the words that designate the world, some emphasize the order of things, like the Greek kosmos [κόσμος] and the Latin *mundus*. Others accentuate the presence of the subject, his being-in-life. The world is what

10 Pelli proceeds to offer several examples in a footnote.

> one comes into at birth, and what one leaves at death. That is the case for English "world," German *Welt*, and Dutch *vereld*, in which the etymology is easier to discern: the length of life (cf. Eng. "old") of a man (Lat. *vir*; Ger. *Wer*- in Werwolf, "wolfman," "werewolf"). The Hebrew word for "world" is currently ʿōlām [עוֹלָם]. (Cassin 2014: 733; trans. Steven Rendell)

In the brief excursus that follows, Brague weighs the time-oriented meanings that *ʻolam* carries in Classical Hebrew, and in the Hebrew Bible in particular. There, *ʻolam* refers both to past and to future time.[11] It also suggests "eternity," as in the time before creation; for example, in Genesis 21:33, where God is referred to as *el ʻolam*, an everlasting god. In Jewish eschatology, the expression *ha-ʻolam ha-ba*, the world to come, is not a place but the time after death that precedes the messianic age. Relatedly, *ha-ʻolam ha-ze*, this world, means now, in this time. Later rabbinic literature attests to an understanding of *ʻolam* as the physical world, and specifically as a measure of the human life span. And while some scholars conjecture that its etymology traces back to the root meaning "to hide" and "conceal," others assert that its root lies in the Akkadian *ullānu*, meaning "distant" (Brin 2001: 277). Today, *sifrut ʻolam*, world literature, encompasses place and time, as well as readership and circulation. As Saul Noam Zaritt has shown in his work on Yiddish conceptions of world literature, which overlap meaningfully with Hebrew, the Yiddish *oylem* is temporally and spatially multifaceted:

> *Oylem* reminds us that, despite its cosmopolitan longings, world literature must also be evaluated in its most material conditions, as a function of local and global markets, as embedded in limited transnational networks, and entangled in the legacies of nationalism and empire. There is no single *oylem*, but a multitude of publics that determine the life and afterlife of a text. There is a constant struggle to determine in what worlds and in whose worlds a text belongs and how various worlds interrelate and overlap, if at all, in space and time. Each *oylem* has its set of rules and expectations, often articulated through divergent forms, languages, and vocabularies. (Zaritt 2020: 12)

While the Yiddish *oylem* includes the Hebrew meanings, Zaritt notes that it also inscribes the idea of a public, "audience or crowd," which he surmises draws from the French *monde* (11).[12] It is this meaning of *oylem*, and its preoccupation with the authors, readers, and texts that inhabit it, that

11 As Brague himself notes, in modern Hebrew, *me-ʻolam*, from an indefinite time, and *le-ʻolam*, to an indefinite time, correspond respectively to "never" and "forever." This usage draws from Classical Hebrew's time-oriented understanding of *ʻolam*.

12 Rémi Brague also suggests a relation between the "untranslatable" *ʻolam* and *monde* (Cassin 2014: 733).

I wish to carry into the Hebrew *'olam*. Zaritt's work points to a conceptual fallacy at the heart of world literature – in the process of creating models and frameworks for world literary study, the particular, and often private and personal, "worlds" of individual writers are occluded. This is where the case of Hebrew, like Yiddish, may prove illuminating to world literary studies, because for the better part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Hebrew writers focused their attention on translation into Hebrew, which had a much smaller circulation and readership, rather than on being translated into larger European languages. Their translation practices and commentary tell us that they were invested in opening the cultural and linguistic parameters of the Hebrew *'olam* through writing and translating, while at the same time, their choice of languages and texts reveal the extent to which the familiar, local, and "near" demarcated the borders of this world.

In a November 3, 1927 diary entry, Goldberg, who was then sixteen years old and already writing and publishing Hebrew poetry, recorded, "I don't care if the works of Russian authors are not read or translated, but it does hurt me a lot if this is the fate of Hebrew authors" (2005: 116).[13] At first glance, Goldberg appears to be acknowledging disparities in status and value between Russian and Hebrew. As the smaller, minor language, Hebrew's investment in readership is a matter of survival. But Goldberg then pivots to a different argument entirely. What binds Goldberg to Hebrew is "something far more important than national pride" (116). Hebrew, she writes, places her within a "magic circle" (*ma'agal kesamim*) that constitutes a distinctly Jewish world, one that distinguishes her and "the daughters of my people" from the Russian heroines she encounters in the work of Chekhov (116). Goldberg's magic circle marks a world apart and simultaneously constitutes its own world, one that by being "Jewish" is arguably more transnational than national.[14] This magic circle represents Goldberg's *'olam*, and it is to the readers within this sphere that Goldberg offers her work – it is in this space and among these interlocutors that she fears being unread. But when Goldberg expresses concern that Hebrew writers will remain untranslated, is she referring to the possibility for translation to take her writing outside of this "magic circle" or rather to translation into the other Jewish languages

13 English translation by Tsipi Keller. Goldberg 2018.

14 Several years later, the Dutch historian and cultural theorist Johan Huizinga would publish his influential study on play, which inspired the concept of the "magic circle" in later game theory and design. For Huizinga, magic circles are variants of the playground, "all are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart" (Huizinga 1938: 10).

that circulate within the space that she has demarcated? And if the latter, does the absence of any reference to these languages (or to Hebrew translations of other languages) unsettle the transnational status of this space, perhaps suggesting that Goldberg's circle may be more national in its aspirations than she herself is prepared to admit?

Reconciling this tension requires some consideration of the status of Hebrew in its modern phase. Throughout the *Haskala*, which spanned the mid-eighteenth to late nineteenth century, Hebrew writers committed to the vernacularization of the Hebrew language, though the secular life of the language remained bound to its status as a universal, sacred tongue. In his discussion on biblical poetry, Moses Mendelssohn, one of the most prominent *Haskala* scholars and proponents of Hebrew language "revival," argued that the vitality of biblical Hebrew even transcended the distortions of translation: "when our sacred poetry is translated into another language, even if its flavor is weakened and its fragrance made bitter by the translation, there nevertheless remains the sweetness of the content" (Mendelssohn 2011: 215). In his 1887 essay "Mavo le-shirat ha-yavanim" (Introduction to Greek Poetry), the nineteenth-century Hebrew translator Aharon Kaminka even went so far as to attribute the origins of lyric poetry to the Hebrew Bible (1887: 129). Although Greek had surpassed Hebrew as "the foundation of a modern general literature" ("ha-literatura ha-chadasha ha-klalit"), Hebrew poetry preceded the Greek tradition and arguably was its source (128).[15] Traces of this discourse on the universality of Hebrew persisted well into the twentieth century, notably in the work of Franz Rosenzweig and Gershom Scholem, for whom Hebrew held a mystical, "hidden power" (quoted in Cutter 1990: 418).

Early twentieth-century modern Hebrew writers were nonetheless cognizant that their work circulated in a cultural and material economy that, with few exceptions, was almost exclusively circumscribed by the Hebrew language and increasingly dependent on the publishing industry in Mandatory Palestine. Furthermore, they understood that relations between Hebrew literature and coetaneous literatures in other languages were often one-sided. This disparity is addressed in a short article that appeared in the journal

15 Kaminka's *klalit* (general) gestures to the field of *littérature générale*, but in Hebrew, it also means "inclusive." *Chadasha* is "modern" but also "new," invoking the discourse of the "techiya," the late nineteenth-century Hebrew revival movement which break from earlier maskilic models. For Kaminka, Hebrew translation drew works, and particularly older texts, into the orbit of this new modern Hebrew literature and revitalized and renewed them.

Ha-tsefira on February 12, 1904, where the author, M., announces that the Sorbonne has introduced its first literature course on "hebraïque moderne" (*sic*), focusing on Hebrew writing from 1743 to the present day (M. 1904: 7). The course was slated to be taught by "Dr. Slouschz," referring to Nahum Slouschz, who had completed his doctorate at the Sorbonne a year earlier on the subject of the Hebrew literary renaissance (an English translation of his dissertation appeared in 1909 under the title *The Renascence of Hebrew Literature, 1743–1885*). For M., this is an acknowledgment that Hebrew was beginning to hold more than a religious and philological interest for European scholars; indeed, it recognized "modern Hebrew" as a "sifrut 'olamit chaya, zmanit u-le'umit" (1904: 7), a living, contemporary, and national world literature. Slouchsz's course objectives, as related in this article, include situating modern Hebrew literature in a comparative framework, highlighting the influence of contemporary French prose and *poésie*. M. concludes on an enthusiastic, aspirational note: "Let's hope that the Sorbonne, that most important European university, sets an example for other universities, and that they too may establish courses on our Hebrew literature and thereby honor Israel and its revival!" (7).

For M., the inclusion of modern Hebrew literature in the Sorbonne's Hebrew curriculum placed Hebrew on the map of contemporary European literature. However, this represented one strand of the world literature discourse in Hebrew and Yiddish. For example, in the early twentieth century, the Hebrew poet Chaim Nachman Bialik was committed to a worlding project (in the Heideggerian sense) of a different order: *kinus*, the "in-gathering" of Jewish texts in Hebrew translation as the basis of a self-sustaining "world" of Hebrew literature. While translating world classics like *Don Quixote* (which Bialik adapted into Hebrew) aided the development of Hebrew as a vernacular language, Bialik's Hebrew world literary model explicitly discouraged the translation of Jewish texts, including those in Hebrew, into other languages. By contrast, in 1931, the critic and translator Jacob Koplewitz (later Yeshurun Keshet) declared that Hebrew's world literary status would remain elusive so long as poets continued to write within a Jewish frame and for Jewish readers only. A true Hebrew "world poetry" (*shira 'olamit*, in his words) would be one that would reach and be relevant to all readers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. A world poetry of this kind was not yet available to Hebrew readers, he averred, for they still turned to Jewish writing (that is, works by Jewish writers), "because Judaism has not yet reached the level of a nation that enfolds and symbolizes within it all of humanity . . . works of that kind are only created by nations that have

a leading role in the world" (Koplewitz 1931: 6).[16] But he was hopeful – not yet aware of the cataclysm to come – that the "rising" population of Jews in the world and processes of secularization toward "an all-encompassing humanist religion" would allow for a humanist worlding of Jewish literature, and Hebrew poetry in particular (6). Emmanuel Katz, a translator of French literature and member of the Revisionist movement, echoed this desire for *enoshiyut*, humanism, but was more explicit in his assertion that Hebrew could not realize its full "world literature" potential without first claiming "national" literary status (Katz 1953: 4).[17]

Disagreements of this kind pervade the discourse of *sifrut 'olam* in the early to mid-twentieth century; it is no coincidence that they proliferate in the interwar years as the European enclaves of Hebrew literary production and culture shifted to Mandatory Palestine. They are also tied to developing ideas that can be traced back to the *Haskala*, concerning humanism and its relation to Judaism, which also underpin the discourse of *Weltliteratur*. In the early twentieth century, Martin Buber was elaborating his ideas on "Hebräischer Humanismus" (Hebrew humanism), central to which was a commitment to Jewish spiritual and cultural renaissance through a return to the Bible and its language. Just as the Italian *umanesmo* turned to Greek and Latin as the tools toward a moral life, Hebrew humanism would afford the Jewish people the opportunity to reclaim their universal status (Stroumsa 1996: 128–30). While Buber rejected what he called "national egoism" – the idea that Jews should strive to be a nation unto all others – leading Zionist thinkers like Joseph Klausner, author of the 1905 volume *Yahdut ve-enoshiyut* (Judaism and Humanism), invoked humanism and universalism in ways that also supported Jewish territorial nationalism and Hebrew monolingualism.[18] Years later, Goldberg's fraught relationship with the European legacy of humanism, and its failure to detain fascism, would shape her postwar preoccupation with world poetry and specifically her turn to the East. But humanism's own vacillation between the national and universal, as well as the national and

16 Jacob (Yaacov) Koplewitz (1873–1977) changed his name to Yeshurun Keshet following the declaration of Statehood. He translations from English, French, and German included works by Jack London, Anatole France, and Thomas Mann.

17 Katz published his piece in *Ha-yarden*, a journal associated with Revisionist Zionism, a branch of Zionism committed to territorial maximalism. His emphasis on national autonomy reflects the role of ideology in shaping national and world literary models in Hebrew.

18 Klausner republished this volume several times in expanded editions, the last one appearing in 1955.

individual, reverberate in Goldberg's own conception of world literature and investment in the production and marketing of *shirat ʻolam*.

The term *shirat ʻolam* begins to appear with greater frequency in the Hebrew press between the 1930s and early 1960s, a period that coincides, and not without incident, with the publication of world poetry anthologies in Hebrew. These volumes offer material attestation of how *shirat ʻolam* was conceived, and how much its varied borders and coordinates relied on the personal backgrounds, political inclinations, and aesthetic preferences of its translators and editors, many poets themselves. The Hebrew world poetry anthology offers a view of the range of poetic worlds that were imagined in this period by bringing together authors and texts in ways that enfold time and place and, via translation, collapse the distance between Hebrew and other languages. As Hannan Hever has shown in his work on the modern Hebrew anthology, the publication history of these anthologies follows the shift from a non-universalist representation of Hebrew as a national, and increasingly territorial language, to one that begins, in the early 1930s, to position Hebrew writing in a more universal frame (1997). It is in this second phase that world poetry anthologies in Hebrew begin to appear. Collections like Avraham Shlonsky's *Lo tirtsach: Yalkut katan shel shirim neged ha-milchama* (Thou Shall Not Kill: A Small Collection of Anti-War Poetry), published in 1932 on the eighteenth anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, consisted almost entirely of translations from German, Russian, and French, with the exception of poems by Avigdor Hameiri (1890–1970), a prominent anti-war Hebrew poet. Although Shlonsky's introduction drew an explicit connection between political tensions in Europe and Mandatory Palestine, the focus on translations, Hever noted, "[displaced] the discussion from the polarized field of Zionist national culture in Erets Israel to the world of Europe" (Hever 1997: 212). In 1942, Shlonsky and Goldberg edited and published the landmark collection *Shirat Rusiya*, Russian Poetry, the first volume in what was intended to be a six-part series titled *Yalkut shirat ha-ʻamim*, collection of poetry of the peoples.[19] *Shirat Rusiya* constituted a Jewish response to a collective, global crisis but also mobilized poetry in Hebrew translation to deliver a universal humanist message as "a single chorus of all the nations of the world" (Goldberg and Shlonsky 1942: 7). Translated into the Hebrew *ʻolam*, these works reached the Hebrew reader in Mandatory Palestine like the *matan Torah*, the giving of the Torah at Sinai. As the editors explained in their introduction, this poetry had weathered "dark times" in other times,

19 For more on the cultural context of *Shirat Rusiya*, see Jacobs 2018: 57–59 and Segal 2008.

places, and languages and now reached the Hebrew reader to offer instruction and guidance, as the ten commandments did to the ancient Israelites in their exile. But these references to the ten commandments go even further – as the foundation of moral law in both Judaism and Christianity, invoking the ten commandments positions Hebrew poetry as both national and universal; it is in the Hebrew *'olam* – the "single chorus" activated through translation – where a universal world literary model is possible. The decision to inaugurate this series with Russian poetry also acknowledged Russian's status as the mother tongue of many early Jewish immigrants, particularly those who immigrated to Mandatory Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s. Goldberg and Shlonsky could have presumed with some confidence that a significant readership of *Shirat Rusiya* would have been familiar with the authors featured there, and certainly with Russian literary history and culture. Had the project continued, the parameters of Hebrew world poetry very well may have expanded; in fact, Ruebner suggests that the French and English poems included in *Kolot* were meant to be part of two subsequent volumes that never materialized (Goldberg 1975: 244). Nevertheless, beginning with three major Western European languages that were, for both of its editors, more "near" than "far" suggests that as a world literary project, the scope of Goldberg's and Shlonsky's *shirat ha-'amim* remained self-contained in its conception.

Anthologies like *Shirat Rusiya* manifested a clear relation between aesthetics and ideology, but the 1940s and 1950s also saw the publication of world poetry anthologies that fell outside of an explicit political frame, like Hananiah Reichman's 1942 *Mi-shirat ha-'olam: kovets tirgumim chofshi'im* (From World Poetry: A Collection of Free Translations) and Joseph (Yosef) Lichtenbaum's 1945 *Givot 'olam: mivchar tirgumei shira* (Everlasting Hills: A Selection of Poetry Translations).[20] One notable example is Gila Uriel's 1953 anthology *Peninim mi-shirat ha-'olam* (Pearls of World Poetry), which drew its selections from her short-lived radio show on world poetry, which was broadcast on Friday evenings for several months between 1951 and 1952. *Peninim mi-shirat ha-'olam* brings together many of the texts that Uriel featured on her program, and from her selections and commentary we can

20 Hananiah Reichman (1905–82) conceived of "world" in terms of literary figures, all men, among them Dmitry Merezhkovsky, William Blake, Frédéric Mistral, and Edgar Allan Poe. Joseph (Yosef) Lichtenbaum (1895–1968) organized his selections by country: China, Japan, Ashkenaz (German-speaking lands), France, Serbia, Russia, and Poland. His title comes from Devarim/Deuteronomy 33:15 where the temporal meaning of *'olam* is invoked. This choice of title implies that these selections of world poetry are timeless and enduring.

reconstruct these episodes and imagine how she introduced listeners to Hebrew translations from the classics of world poetry. Uriel's explanations of poetic form, meter, and literary history ensured that readers never lost sight of what they were hearing. This was poetry, distinct from other genres, with its own language, forms, and history. In a review of the anthology, the critic L. ascribed a "worldly" egalitarian ethos to Uriel's project: "In the city and the village many anticipated impatiently these broadcasts," he wrote, affirming the "city and villages" as a binary between cosmopolitan, urban listeners, like those residing in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and the "villagers," a category that could have encompassed kibbutzim and Israel's emerging working-class cities (L. 1953: 5). This imperative to bring literature to a wider public beyond the intelligentsia also shaped the series "Sifriya la-ʿam," the people's library, a 1955 initiative of the publisher ʿAm ʿOved ("a working people"). This long-running series has brought together Hebrew original works with translations of (mostly European) world classics, and produced them in a format that intends to be affordable and accessible.[21] Uriel, however, is far less political and aspirational in her introduction to the volume than L. credits her to be, where she makes it clear that her aim is primarily pedagogical, to bring these texts to young readers who are not able to access them in their original languages, as well as to "those who mainly know these works in the original, but who certainly will find some interest in returning and enjoying these works again in this Hebrew garb" (*levush ʿivri*) (Uriel 1953: 7). But L.'s remarks call attention to the question of circulation and audience in mapping *shirat ʿolam* and how these may have differed between the radio broadcast and book. In her broadcasts, for example, Uriel presented this world poetry in fifteen-minute installments ("pearls") over the course of several months. The anthology, on the other hand, gathered this material in a more comprehensive, unified format that clearly marked the space certain languages, places, and authors occupied in her world map.

Although Uriel's introduction claims a poetic map that stretches "from east to west," the anthology primarily encompasses works from the Western European tradition. "East" refers here to a smattering of poems from the Chinese (Li Bai), Japanese (anonymous), Sanskrit (excerpt from the Rigveda), and a few "ancient" texts (Sappho, Confucius, among others).[22] The

21 I am grateful to Chen Bar-Yitzhak for suggesting an analogy between this series and the world poetry collections under discussion.

22 I want to highlight here Uriel's inclusion of Lichtenbaum's translation of Li Bai's "Hearing a Flute on a Spring Night in Luoyang," which becomes in his translation

collection otherwise overwhelmingly favors texts from English, French, Russian, and Polish, with entire sections dedicated to the poetry of Goethe, Heine, Byron, and Pushkin. This Eurocentric configuration was not uncommon in this period. Uriel's anthology may not align her explicitly with a political movement, but it nonetheless evinces signs of Western and Eurocentric bias in its view of the world, wherein the movement eastward gathers fewer and fewer texts the further east the project travels, and by and large neglects Arabic-language texts despite its status as one of Israel's major local languages.[23]

Ruebner's collection of Goldberg's translations of *shirat 'olam*, on the other hand, aspires to be more inclusive in its range of languages, but its movements between near and far, centers and peripheries, east and west likewise privilege European writing. In fact, in a 1961 report on the state of the Israeli high school curriculum, Goldberg observed that "world literature (basically, European literature) is taught in high schools in a superficial way" (Razili 1961: 14). Goldberg's conception of world literature certainly extended beyond Europe, but the parenthetical statement appears, on the surface, to offer a formulation that conflates the two. It raises the question: where and how did non-European literatures fit in Goldberg's *'olam*? The following section will explore how Goldberg's perceptions of world literature took shape in the early decades of the twentieth century, as well as the place and status of the Far East in her constellation of world poetry. Goldberg's interest in the literatures of China and Japan was mediated by German Orientalism, but the poetry of the Far East, and China in particular, also played a vital role in Goldberg's reckoning with the broken *'olam* of (European) world literature in the postwar years.

Goldberg, Du Fu, and World Poetry

On September 8, 1939, just days after Germany invaded Poland, Goldberg published a short essay in the journal *Ha-shomer ha-tsa'ir* on the subject of love poetry in wartime. The essay, "'Al oto ha-nose 'atsmo" (On the Very Same Subject), famously begins: "This is the fifth person – I thought to myself and stopped counting – because many – many more than I could count – were

"The Distant Flute" (He-chalil ha-rachok). Lichtenbaum's Hebrew translation is a reworking of the Chinese via German *Nachdichtungen*. This poem appeared in his translation of Max Fleischer's *Der Porzellanpavillon: Nachdichtungen Chinesischer Lyrik* (The Porcelain Pavilion: Recreations of Chinese Poetry) (1927), published as *Beitan ha-charsina: mi-shirei sin* (The Porcelain Pavilion: Selections of Chinese Poetry) (1943).

23 Uriel's anthology includes one poem from Arabic, a short untitled poem by the historian Ibn al-Wardī (691/1292–749/1349).

approaching me with the question – 'So, when will you start writing war poems?'" (Goldberg 2017: 396). This query prompts a long meditation on why, in times of war, the demand for engaged writing emerges. As if, Goldberg wonders, wartime suddenly rendered poetry's other preoccupations irrelevant, replacing them with a new set of interests and priorities. "I believe entirely," Goldberg writes, "that if there is a value to human life it is principally in the existing things in one's daily life: 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun'" (397).[24] By quoting Kohelet (Ecclesiastes), Goldberg is also assigning to these "existing things" a timeless, universal value. Goldberg continues:

> I believe that the living, warm body, bearing with it the possibilities of love and suffering in all their forms – the body of the living human being – is more important to life than all of the corpses (even those of heroes) on the field of slaughter. And not because a living dog is better than a dead lion, but because a living human being – who is able to think, to love, to hate, to change the ways of the world – is more valuable than an inanimate object. (397–98)

Goldberg anticipates that readers will challenge her on this point: what about David's lament to Yonatan, the *Iliad*, *Don Quixote* – are these not enduring works written in and about wartime? While she concedes that times of war can give rise to great literature, she argues that what makes these lasting world classics is that they offer readers a way back to human values. And it is here that Goldberg turns to the East:

> That being said, one of my favorite poems in the world is – a war poem. It is a poem by the Chinese poet Du Fu, who lived in the eighth century, in the days of a great war between North and South China. The poem is called "The Cricket," and here it is:
>
> זָקַנְתִּי וַאֲנִי בַּצָּפוֹן
> וְאִשְׁתִּי נֶעֱגָנָה בַּדָּרוֹם.
> הַמִּלְחָמָה פָּשְׁטָה בָּאָרֶץ.
> נָשַׁמּוּ שָׂדוֹת.
> בַּנֵּכָר, בְּלֵילוֹת הַנֵּכָר,
> בַּבַּיִת הַזָּר,
> שׁוֹמֵעַ אֲנִי צִרְצוּרוֹ שֶׁל צְרָצַר.
> אֵיךְ יְכוֹלָה אִשָּׁה גַּלְמוּדָה וּזְקֵנָה
> לְהַקְשִׁיב כָּל הַלַּיְלָה
> לְצִרְצוּר הַצְּרָצַר?

24 Goldberg cites Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 11:7. The English translation is from the King James Version.

I am old and in the North
and my wife is shackled to the South.
War spread over the land.
Fields wasted.
In a foreign land, on these foreign nights,
in a strange house,
I hear the chirping of a cricket.
How can an old and desolate woman
listen all night
to the chirping of a cricket?

(Goldberg 2017: 399–400; my trans.)[25]

Du Fu (712–770) was one of the most prominent Chinese poets of the Tang dynasty and one of Goldberg's favorite poets. References to his work recur in a number of her essays and poems, and it is mainly in the former that Goldberg's Hebrew translations of his work can be found. The poem that Goldberg cites above is one of many poems that Du Fu composed during the period of the An Lushan Rebellion (755–763), which divided the northern and southern regions of China. Although this conflict is the cause of the separations and losses that preoccupy the speaker, his ear turns away from the sounds of war to the chirping of a cricket. This gesture is at the heart of Goldberg's commitment to a different kind of poetry in wartime:

> Hence, I am deeply conscious that the poet is the one who in war time is forbidden – forbidden – to forget the true values of *life*. A poet is not only allowed to write a love poem in times of war, but *must*, because in times of war love is more valuable than murder. In days of dread a poet not only has a right to sing a nature song of blooming trees, of laughing children, but also an *obligation*, the obligation to remind man that he is still a human being, that in the world there still exist those same simple and eternal values that make life more precious . . . (398, original emphasis)

It is this experience of "the true values of life," as represented by the cricket's chirping, that narrows the distance between the speaker and his wife in Du Fu's poem. And if Du Fu's cricket reaches the Hebrew reader in Mandatory Palestine, through Goldberg's translation, it is because such experiences are universal and translatable, and thereby have the capacity to bring human beings together in wartime. It is through these shared, timeless human values and experiences that Goldberg builds her world literary model.

25 For the original Chinese and a recent English translation, see Owen 2015: 172–73. Comparing Owen's translation and my translation of Goldberg's poem-translation makes it clear that Goldberg's version significantly reworks the original poem.

But how did the poetry of Du Fu reach Goldberg? In an essay titled "Chalon le-merchakim: maka 'al 'anaf ha-zahav" (A Window onto Distances: A Strike on the Golden Bough), published in later 1935, several months after she had immigrated to Palestine, Goldberg refers to Edna Worthley Underwood's 1929 *Tu Fu: Wanderer and Minstrel under the Moons of Cathay* as a source of English translations (Goldberg 2017: 75).[26] She also acknowledges the work of the German writer Klabund (nom de plume of Alfred Henschke) and his translations of Chinese poetry (75). According to Giddon Ticotsky, it appears that she also may have consulted the *Nachdichtungen* of Hans Bethge, which appeared in the 1907 volume *Die chinesische Flöte* (The Chinese Flute).[27] It is worth noting here that Erwin von Zach's complete translation of Du Fu's work into German prose translation appeared in 1935–36 as well. But these translations do not prove to be an "original" for the translations that we find across Goldberg's oeuvre, and this Du Fu translation in particular. For one, the German and English translations are the products of a radical, transcreative translation practice, the kind to which Chinese and Japanese poetries were often subjected in the early twentieth century. Goldberg's translations push these texts further afield. While Du Fu's oeuvre includes an eight-line poem titled "The Cricket" (促織), this poem makes no explicit reference to north and south, foreign lands, and the war. While these references do appear across other poems by the poet, only the last four lines of Goldberg's translation correspond, albeit loosely, to this particular poem. Separation and war were very much on Goldberg's mind in early September 1939, and though she was resisting the demand for war poetry, her Hebrew translation of Du Fu's poem created a space where such a poem could be composed. Furthermore, the north/south binary that opens Goldberg's *Nachdichtung* of Du Fu's poem is one that Goldberg draws from German and Russian Romanticism, and its reworking in modern Hebrew poetry (Jacobs 2018: 111–13). Hebrew poets like Bialik would invoke these coordinates as part of a poetry of exile, where north represented the diaspora and south the land of Israel (*Erets Yisrael*). Goldberg would trouble this binary in her own poetry, particularly in the postwar years, but already in her Du Fu translation we see how she reorients, in translation, the concepts of home and exile. If Goldberg is indeed addressing her readers through this translation, where is "the foreign land" (*nekhar*) located? Is it Europe? Or Palestine?

Goldberg's translations of Chinese poets, like Du Fu, are not exactly pseudo-translations, insofar as we know that the original poems exist in some form

26 The essay was the first of three which carried the title "Chalon le-merchakim" (A Window onto Distances) and focused, respectively, on China, Japan, and India.

27 Giddon Ticotsky, personal email, February 13, 2019.

despite the considerable reworking they undergo in translation. All the same, Toury's typology of pseudotranslation elucidates Goldberg's inclusion of Chinese poetry in her world literary model in wartime. For Toury, pseudotranslations reflect an author's "subordination" to a more "dominant" literary language and culture: "An attempt is thus made to impart to the text some of the superiority attributed to that culture" (Toury 1995: 42). This motivation may explain Goldberg's explicit pseudotranslations of French poetry, but they do not adequately account for her liberal reworkings of Chinese poetry. Unlike French poetry, which Goldberg read in the original, Chinese (and Japanese) poetry came to Goldberg primarily through German *Nachdichtungen*. As a student at the University of Bonn in the early 1930s, Goldberg enrolled in the Oriental Seminar, where she wrote her dissertation under the supervision of the German orientalist scholar Paul Kahle, who brought Chinese and Japanese into its curriculum. It was this involvement with German orientalism that mediated her interest in the "East" beyond Eastern Europe ("this semester it seems that I will have to go a bit further east than Bialystok or Tel Aviv" [Weiss and Ticotsky, 2009, 96]), which Na'ama Rokem has described as "an ambivalent amalgamation of the Western gaze . . . and an awareness of her own position in Germany as an 'oriental' outsider" (Rokem 2017: 222).[28] It was through this seminar that Goldberg also came into contact with students who hailed from these countries, encounters that also found their way into her writing.

"The Far East is 'exotic' to us just as we and our land are exotic to Europe," Goldberg asserted in another 1935 essay, this one about India (Goldberg 2017: 85). While Yfaat Weiss reads this statement as Goldberg's reminder to her Hebrew readers "that their everyday world in Palestine is seen as exotic by the people of Europe," I see a more complicated analogy at work (Weiss 2009: 213). Goldberg's inclusion of the Far East in her world literary mapping cannot be disassociated from the German orientalist context that brought these works to her attention.

In a revealing episode mentioned in "Chalon le-merchakim: Chi'ukh yapani" (A Window onto Distances: A Japanese Smile), a 1936 essay on prewar Japan, Goldberg recounts her conversation with Matsumoto Tokumei (1898–1981), one of her lecturers in the Oriental Seminar and a specialist in Buddhist philosophy.[29] Their encounter, which dates back to her student years in Bonn, takes place along the Rhine, where Matsumoto recites a classic Japanese poem and then provides (presumably) his own

28 Goldberg's humanism is a subject that Na'ama Rokem has been exploring in greater depth and one which she reads in relation to the work of Erich Auerbach, particularly *Mimesis* (1946), and Goldberg's writings on Dante. See Rokem 2017.

29 His name also appears as Tokumyo Matsumoto in some sources.

German translation, which Goldberg then translates into Hebrew for her readers. Matsumoto's "delicate" recitation mitigates some of Goldberg's anxieties concerning Japan's expansionist foreign policy, including its invasion of Northeast China (Manchuria) in the 1930s, which Matsumoto himself defended in the German- and English-language presses (Matsumoto 1935).[30] Later that day, at a lecture by Oscar Kressler (1876–1970), a specialist in Japanese literature, Goldberg learns that this particular Japanese poem is actually an abridged version of a poem "by the famous Chinese poet, Du Fu" (Goldberg 2017: 102), a realization that brings us back to her encounter with Matsumoto and the poem he translates for her:

> שֶׁקֶט. וּבֵיתִי אָבוּד בֵּין גַּנִּים. הָאֲגַם הַבָּהִיר—רָקִיעַ שֶׁנִּרְדַּם בֵּין דְּשָׁאִים. רַעַשׁ קַל. הַצְּפַרְדֵּעַ קָפְצָה אֶל הָרְאִי הַשֶּׁקֶט.
>
> Silence. And my house lost between the gardens. The clear lake –the skies resting between the grasses. A soft din. The frog jumped towards the quiet mirror. (101)

Readers of Japanese poetry will recognize Matsuo Bashō's famed frog haiku, which has been translated and adapted many times into many languages since it was first composed in 1686. We presume that Goldberg's Hebrew translation comes from Matsumoto's German, but if that is the case, he has substantially expanded the poem in his German translation (to compare, here is Sam Hamill's English translation: "At the ancient pond / a frog plunges into / the sound of water" [2005: 54]).[31] It could be that Goldberg has transcribed Kressler's version of the poem, or perhaps what we are reading is Goldberg's reworking, or *Nachdichtung*, of one or both German versions she heard that day. In any case, either Kressler or Goldberg has overstated the poem's provenance. It is true that Bashō was influenced by Du Fu, but his frog haiku is not an adaptation or translation of a longer Chinese poem by the poet. Nevertheless, for Goldberg, the episode validates her assessment of Japanese literature ("nothing more than an imitation of Chinese literature") and prewar Japan ("like a cloud brooding over the world") (Goldberg 2017: 100–1). But what also stands out here are the kinds of circulations and translations that Goldberg

30 The reference I have provided is to the English translation of his article "Japans Aktion im Fernen Osten im Lichte seiner Weltanschauung" (Japan's Campaign in the Far East in Light of Its Worldview), published earlier that year in *Europäische Revue*, Vol. 11: 642–46.

31 For a collection of multiple translations of this haiku into English, including Sam Hamill's version, see "Matsuo Bashô: Frog Haiku (Thirty-two Translations and One Commentary)," *Bureau of Public Secrets*, www.bopsecrets.org/gateway/passages/basho-frog.htm.

privileges, and the role she takes upon herself as an arbiter of the translatability of the Far East. By turning Matsumoto's classical Japanese poem into a poem by Du Fu, Goldberg performs an act of translation that allows the poem to enter her world literary model and the values that she ascribes to it. As in her reworking of Du Fu's cricket poem, Goldberg's Hebrew *Nachdichtung* of Bashō's haiku includes traces of her own preoccupations in this period. The "house lost between the gardens" is her addition, invoking her own position between Palestine and Europe. In fact, she recounts the conversation with Matsumoto in 1936, almost exactly a year after she landed in Tel Aviv. Which is to say that the leap Basho's frog makes in her translation, like the chirping of Du Fu's cricket, does not reach her from coordinates as far east as we may imagine. It comes to her in German, a language that by 1935, sitting along the Rhine, was already both "far and near."

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World Literature as Process and Relation: East Asia's Russia and Translation

HEEKYOUNG CHO

Introduction

This chapter rethinks world literature models through a discussion of Russian and East Asian (specifically Korea, Japan, and China) literary relations and translation-related issues (the politics of translation, the circulation of texts, and international literary prizes). As these two volumes of *The Cambridge History of World Literature* aptly show, approaches to world literature as a concept, corpus, field, and discipline are extremely diverse and complicated, presenting ideas that simultaneously conflict with and supplement each other. As a part of such multilayered and multi-pronged approaches, this chapter, I hope, will be read both as a historical study of a specific case of transregional literary interactions that provides a substantial context for further discussions of world literature, and as a call for socioculturally contextualized approaches to the politics of translation inextricably related to world literature. I begin with Pascale Casanova's and Franco Moretti's world literature theories before moving on to more recent theories, because Casanova and Moretti are among the pioneers who reinvigorated discussions of world literature in recent years and are important reference points in the field. Casanova and Moretti are particularly relevant to discussions of Russian and East Asian literary relations because their arguments focus specifically on the formation of modern national literatures. A case study of Russian and

This chapter is a revised version of my 2018 journal article "Rethinking World Literature through the Relations between Russian and East Asian Literatures," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* (e-journal), Vol. 28: 7–26 (https://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-28/cho). The explanation of Russian and East Asian cultural interaction has been adapted from sections of my 2016 book *Translation's Forgotten History: Russian Literature, Japanese Mediation, and the Formation of Modern Korean Literature*.

East Asian literary relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provides us with an example that substantially and historically challenges their theories. Taking these literary relations as a starting point for a discussion of world literature, I further explore the contributions and limitations of more recent studies of world literature, placing emphasis on translation, circulation, literary prizes, and ethical approaches to world literature.

The questions of what constitutes world literature and who has the power to decide which authors and works are included in that category have always been political. During the nineteenth century, Western "civilization" asserted its preeminence through legal, economic, and military force, while signs of the culture were nonnegotiable emblems of entitlement in the Euro-American imperialist world order. At that time in the West, there was effectively no possibility of recognizing other cultures as having equivalent contemporary value. As can be seen in the canons of Western literature, art, and music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the West understood itself as the source of all cultural value, especially when it came to modern forms such as the novel. Those assumptions have been thoroughly undermined over the last half century, however, which has reopened the question of what constitutes world literature or world culture.

Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanova have tried to answer this question in ways that move beyond latent colonialist and imperialist assumptions, though they have nevertheless been broadly criticized for their continuing Eurocentric perspectives.[1] Moretti's theorization is useful in that it undermines the commonsense assumption that the novel and modern literature emerged autonomously in Western European countries; it shows instead that most literatures went through a process of "compromise" with other cultures. However, Moretti adapts Immanuel Wallerstein's socioeconomic theory of world-systems to literature, which results in systematizing literatures of the world into core and periphery (and semi-periphery) and oversimplifying the complexity of the encounters among cultures. He holds that the movement or flow takes place almost exclusively from the core (Spanish, French, and English literatures) to the periphery, and accounts for the textual production that emerges from those encounters by categorizing it into three simple components: foreign form (foreign plot), local material (local characters), and local form (local narrative voice). One problematic implication of

1 Criticisms of Moretti include Arac 2002; Kristal 2002; and Shih 2004. Criticisms of Casanova include Sapiro 2003; Prendergast 2004: 7; Ganguly 2008; and Hill 2011.

this schematization is its reaffirmation of a Eurocentric diffusion model and a failure to examine relations and exchanges among "(semi-)peripheries." This chapter examines the relationships among the (semi-)peripheries of Russia and East Asia to show that, in this case, the diffusion model and simplistic division of forms and material into "foreign" and "local" are inadequate for understanding how modern literature formed around the world.

Casanova's book *The World Republic of Letters* (2004) reaffirms the Eurocentric mapping of world literature in a more obvious way than Moretti's. The "Greenwich Meridian of Literature" – the term Casanova uses to indicate the relative autonomy of the literary field and literary modernity – is linked with the literary world and publishing industry in Paris. In Casanova's theory, every literary text is situated within competitive relations with other texts in joining literary modernity, and within a hierarchical relationship with the center of "the world republic of letters." As with Moretti's model, this idea denies other possible forms of relationality, particularly among literatures that are remote from the Greenwich Meridian of Literature. For Casanova, in particular, France – which became the literary center because it had accumulated literary assets for the longest time and had more literary independence than any other national literature – is associated with such terms as "international," "autonomous," "cosmopolitan," and "literary innovation," whereas literatures in peripheries are associated with "national," "political," "provincial," and "stylistic conservatism" unless challenged by writers who are touched or recognized by the center (108–14). Casanova's argument is of little use to the analysis of literary worlds undertaken in this chapter. The East Asian literary community imagined and pursued an alternative literature that actively engaged with social problems and people's lives through interactions with Russian literature, not through alignment with literary modernity in Paris.

Through a specific discussion of the transregional literary relations in East Asia and Russia, I show that these cases effectively and substantially refute the diffusion model of world literature and the perspective that conceives of literary works being embedded in competitive relations among national literatures. Through a further discussion of recent world literary theories, I argue that we would be better served by perceiving world literature more as a totality of entangled literary and cultural relations and processes than as an entity composed of certain literary works that must operate by inclusion and exclusion or as a single diffusion network defined by hierarchy and competition. Even more importantly, we should consider "world literature" to be

a complex mode of those networks that constantly generates new meanings and implications through those entangled literary and cultural relations and processes. I also argue that rethinking world literature as a methodology, not merely an object to know, provides us with new perspectives for focusing on these networks in various ways, which allows us to better understand the world through literatures and their connections. I begin by discussing the relations that East Asian cultures had with Russian literature, their shared sensibility about literature, and the case of Russia and East Asia in relation to world literature theories.

"Literature for Life": Russian Literature in East Asia

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, East Asian cultures avidly translated and imported foreign texts in the process of creating a new type of literature for the modern era. In Korea, translation of foreign literature started in the 1900s and reached its peak in the 1920s. Essays by Korean writers show that they eagerly sought out Russian literature, which was the most favored of all foreign literatures.[2] For example, Yi Hyosŏk recalls that during high school in the early 1920s, he and his friends "also read English and French literature such as Hardy and Zola, but nothing could compete with the popularity of Russian literature" (Yi H. 1990, VII: 156–57).

Russian literature was also the most popular "Western" literature in China, Korea, and Japan during the formation of these countries' national literatures. There are several possible reasons for this: geographical proximity; political and military events, including the Russo-Japanese War and the Russian revolution; and the availability of translations of Russian literature in multiple languages, especially in English and Japanese. It is also very likely that writers in Japan, China, and Korea felt a strong sympathy with Russian writers and with the characters described in their works. Literature takes on a special role as a voice of social conscience in societies in which the state controls political speech. The tsarist regime in Russia, the strong state in modern Japan, and the Japanese colonial government in Korea all controlled public speech and blocked politically dangerous messages. This type of censorship had the effect of endowing literature with a marked sociopolitical importance. In countries that were partially or fully colonized, such as China and Korea, literature became a space in which

2 There were 89 total translations from Western literature during the 1910s, compared with 671 in the 1920s (Kim P. 1998a: 414). In the 1920s, 81 Russian, 78 French, 55 English, 24 American, and 23 German literary works were translated. For details, see Kim P. 1998b: 188–712.

intellectuals could express their sociopolitical concerns indirectly. Liang Qichao, a Chinese reformist and philosopher, held literature to be "the most effective instrument of social reform" (Ng 1988: 4). Lu Xun, credited with writing the first modern Chinese short story, considered literature to be the best tool for changing the Chinese national character, and Yi Kwangsu, credited with writing the first modern Korean novel, considered it "a fundamental force which determines the rise and fall of a nation."[3]

One of the most noted aspects of Leo Tolstoy's persona as it was understood in Korea was the claim that the tsarist regime could not punish him because he was a renowned literary figure (Ilso 1921: 39). Thus, the Tolstoy whom Korean intellectuals took as a model was not the author who wrote aesthetically excellent works but the activist who engaged with the problems of contemporary society through literature. To a certain extent, this focus on Tolstoy's role in his society reflects the Confucian emphasis on the ideal man of letters as a benevolent social and moral leader. But it also addresses the situation in which East Asian intellectuals found themselves – namely, one that left them little room for direct engagement with the political circumstances they lived in as the forces of colonization and development swept the world. In China, for example, the May Fourth writers Lu Xun, Yu Dafu, Mao Dun, and Ba Jin sensed a resemblance between themselves and the "superfluous and revolutionary Hamlet tradition" exemplified by the intellectual heroes of nineteenth-century Russian novels, whose idealism was so often frustrated by state power (Ng 1988: 4–5).

Lu Xun in particular was explicit about why Chinese intellectuals sympathized with Russian literature:

> Stories of detectives, adventurers, English ladies and African savages can only titillate the surfeited senses of those who have eaten and drunk their fill. But some of our young people were already conscious of being oppressed and in pain. They wanted to struggle, not to be scratched on the back, and were seeking for genuine guidance.
>
> That was when they discovered Russian literature.
>
> That was when they learned that Russian literature was our guide and friend. For from it we can see the kindly soul of the oppressed, their sufferings and struggles. Hope blazed up in our hearts when we read the works of the forties [1840s], and sorrow flooded our souls when we read those of the sixties [1860s]. (Lu Xun 1959: 181)

3 For Lu Xun's discussion on the Chinese national character, see Liu 1995: 45–76 and Yi K. 1977, I: 545–46.

The image of others is produced through the projection of self-identity onto others, and self-identity itself is constructed through the same process. In this case, Lu Xun's understanding of and desire for Russian literature discloses the ideal identity of Chinese literature, or one that Chinese intellectuals were hoping to claim.

For Korean intellectuals, Russian literature fit most closely with their idealized conception of modern literature as it developed during the 1910s and 1920s. An Hwak, Chu Yosŏp, Kim Kijin, and Pak Yŏnghŭi argued that Russian literature differed from other European literatures in that it publicly pursued the reform of Russian society. This pursuit led them to consider Russian literature to be morally superior (Chu 1920: 88; Kim K. 1988–89, IV:341; Pak 1977, III: 24; An 1921: 41). What they saw in Russian literature was "a literature for life,"[4] meaning that Russian literature was not "art for art's sake" but an art for life's sake. The phrase "literature for life" is ambiguous, but in this context, it emphasized Russian literature's greater involvement in society than other literatures. The expression "literature for life" was used in China as well as Korea. Chinese intellectuals believed that Russian literature endorsed a "literature of man" and "literature for life" that distinguished itself by "portraying the oppressed and struggling to achieve a better future for them" (Gamsa 2010: 29–33). East Asian writers' passionate engagement with Russian literature was related to their own desire for an active role for literature in their specific sociopolitical situations.

Russian Literature as an Explanatory Tool for East Asian Literatures

Korea's extensive engagement with Russian literature during the early twentieth century was one part of an East Asian intellectual community that utilized Russian literature to develop a new, modern literature. Addressing East Asia through the process of its interaction with Russian literature lets us see common cultural denominators in China, Japan, and Korea that do not necessarily surface when we approach East Asian modern literatures vis-à-vis "the West."

The process of East Asian interaction with Russian literature highlights the fact that a foreign literature went through a number of layers of linguistic and cultural mediation as it entered the literary world of East Asia. Russian

4 Korean writers used a specific phrase such as "*insaeng ŭl wihan yesul*" (literature/art for life) (Kim K. 1988–89, II: 422) or explained that Russian literature is "the literature that has the closest relationship with life" among all literatures (An 1921: 41).

literature was mostly read and translated in East Asia either through other Western languages or through Japanese. Even though many intellectuals hardly knew enough Russian to read or translate Russian texts, Russian literature was the most frequently translated literature in East Asia during a crucial formative period for modern East Asian literatures, and arguably had the greatest intellectual impact of any Western literature on Japan, China, and Korea in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[5]

The case of Russian literature in East Asia, therefore, provides a large-scale and extreme example of how the general accessibility of a foreign language does *not* determine the volume of translation or the popularity of literature in that language. In fact, it shows that linguistic distance or unfamiliarity between two cultures does not necessarily discourage the engagement of one culture with another. It is a unique aspect of East Asian modernity that East Asia created an immense field of cultural interest in Russian literature despite a relatively undeveloped infrastructure of language acquisition or education about Russia.

The three writers who are credited with writing the first modern novel or short story in Japan, Korea, and China – Futabatei Shimei, Yi Kwang-su, and Lu Xun, respectively – all had a strong connection with Russian literature both in terms of their literary work and in terms of the direction of their own lives. Futabatei Shimei explained that Russian writers studied the oppression of people as "a human problem" and described their approach to the problem of oppression as "sincere" or "serious" (*majime*). He took Turgenev's *Hunter's Sketches* (1852) as an example of a work that was a factor in the emancipation of the serfs, and he emphasized the sacrifices Russian writers made for their literature (Futabatei 1965: 283–84). Futabatei's view is close to that of Lu Xun. It is not a coincidence that Yi Kwang-su's self-conception as a writer and his theory

5 According to Tetsuo Mochizuki, "Other literatures, French, German, and English in particular, also played an important role in the shaping of modern Japanese literature, but of those introduced during the [the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries], Russian literature is rightly regarded as the most influential" (1995: 17). In the case of China, Gamsa argues that "by common consent, the literature of no other country had as important and as many-sided an impact on modern China as did the literature of Russia and the Soviet Union" (2010: 4). For the number of Chinese translations of Russian literature in different periods, see Gamsa 2008: 20–25. In a study of Japanese-Russian non-state intellectual relations from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, Sho Konishi argues that "in macro historical perspective, the Russian cultural presence in Japan from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century was, for interpretive purposes, comparable to that of the Chinese cultural presence in the intellectual life of Tokugawa Japan before 1860 and the American cultural presence in the intellectual life of Japan after the Asia-Pacific War" (Konishi 2013: 5).

of literature incorporated Tolstoy in many respects; that the first modern Japanese novel, Futabatei's *Drifting Cloud* (*Ukigumo*, 1887), shows a close connection with Russian writers such as Nikolai Gogol and Turgenev; and that the title of Lu Xun's first modern Chinese story, "A Madman's Diary" (Kuángrén rìjì, 1918), resembles that of Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" (1835). What attracted these three writers to nineteenth-century Russian literary works – and what they paid primary attention to – was less their aesthetic qualities or modern outlook than their concern with common people and society. Thus, Russian literature was not simply an "advanced" civilizational technology for East Asian writers to emulate or compete with, but something through and within which they could envision and communicate a shared directionality in the literatures that they themselves were making.

While East Asian intellectuals' aspirations vis-à-vis literature were closely intertwined with their concern for their societies and oppressed people, their engagement with Russian literature also demonstrated how literature could shape their lives and lived reality. Translations of foreign literature in early twentieth-century Korea did not attempt to reproduce "the original" but appropriated foreign works productively. Translators creatively reconstructed source texts, developing new ways of perceiving and shaping lived reality. In some cases, writers went beyond their perceivable lived reality, using literature to spell out the lives they would live and the lives they would ask other people to join. Some writers lived the lives they described in their literature, as we can see in the homology between the Korean writer Cho Myŏng-hŭi and his own characters in "Naktong River," a short story that Cho created during the mid-1920s through a translation of Turgenev's 1860 novel *On the Eve*. The hero of "Naktong River," Sŏng-un, returns to Korea and leads a social movement after being involved in the independence movement in Northeast China for five years, and after his death the heroine, Rosa, leaves for a northern area (Russia or China) to take up Sŏng-un's struggle. After writing this story, Cho Myŏng-hŭi himself left for Russia but was executed there and did not return to Korea. Through Turgenev's characters and through his own characters, Cho had thus already vicariously lived the life he would pursue in reality when he followed their path of cultural and political activism. Similarly, for Chinese writers, "Russian, and then Soviet, literature in China was identified with real life, its fictional characters with living men and women and its authors with teachers" (Gamsa 2010: 12). When East Asian intellectuals characterized Russian literature as "literature for life" and cried out for such a literature in their own languages, this meant

not only the literature that they would produce but also the literature that they felt was producing their own present and future lives.

The image of Russian literature and writers that East Asian intellectuals built did not necessarily correspond to reality. A clear example is their belief that Dostoevsky was a representative humanist[6] and socialist writer who had tremendous sympathy for oppressed people, including the colonized, even though Dostoevsky was actually a stalwart imperialist and typical orientalist. His essay "Geok-Tepe. What Is Asia to Us?" argued that the conquered Asian people (of Siberia and Central Asia) constituted "an indispensable element in the overall picture of Russian glory" – a detail his admirers overlooked (Lim 2013: 9). East Asian intellectuals fashioned their ideals through careful selection of foreign materials, as well as the occasional outright fabrication. They established Dostoevsky not as an apologist for empire but as a sympathetic friend to the lower classes, who, through his writing, embraced the thinking and way of life of the downtrodden. East Asian writers therefore projected an image of the literature they *desired* onto the image of Russian literature, (re) constructing it to fit their purposes in the process.

As recent studies show, it is also problematic to consider Russia as a seamless part of the West in relation to Asia (Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2001, 2010; Konishi 2013; Lim 2013). Russia's own relationship to Asia was complicated by a historically and culturally complex identity vis-à-vis Western Europe as well as by its geographical and ethnic proximity to Asia. Meanwhile, East Asia saw Russia as a Western culture, but one that had some distance from Western European cultures due to its geographical and racial proximity to Asia, and that was in the position of being a latecomer to modernization. East Asian intellectuals perceived Russia as an alternative to Western modernity, as is apparent in the example of the Russian-Japanese

6 "Humanism" is one of the keywords that describe the intellectual atmosphere in 1910s and 1920s Japan and Korea. Its meaning was quite broad and it was translated into several different terms in Japanese and Korean, but the dominant use of the term was to refer to "humanitarianism" or "ethical humanism" (*jindōshugi* in Japanese and *indojuŭi* in Korean). Japanese and Korean intellectuals' fascination with humanism – and literature that embodies and promotes it – evolved surrounding their enthusiastic engagement with Tolstoy's philosophical thought and was then extended to other nineteenth-century Russian writers and intellectuals, including Dostoevsky. In 1920s Korea, where proletarian literature was one of the most dominant literary movements, Korean intellectuals depicted Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as radical intellectuals and even introduced them as socialists in a broad sense who took a strong critical stance against social injustice, oppression, and colonization. For a more detailed explanation of humanism in early twentieth-century Japan and Korea, see Cho 2016: 68–71), and for further discussion about the radicalization of nineteenth-century Russian literature in Korea, see Cho 2016: chapter 3.

anarchist community in Japan in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Konishi 2013: 6–10). Lu Xun and Zheng Zhenduo also considered Russian literature "an acceptable alternative to 'the West'" for China (Gamsa 2010: 15).

Incorporating Russian literature as a comprehensive explanatory tool for East Asian literature elucidates East Asian intellectuals' shared desire for social justice, as well as their awareness of choices and alternatives that were available and sought after even amid the tumult of modernization. This perspective does not emerge as readily, however, when we approach the impact of Western European and American literature on East Asian literature, nor when we consider the connections between Russia and one or another single East Asian culture. Although literature in twenty-first-century East Asia seems to exist as only one among many forms of art and mass-mediated culture, the shared humanist view of literature in modern East Asia – which was imagined and concretized through dialogue with Russian literature and crystallized in the expression "literature for life" – reminds us that literatures in East Asia were born and constructed as a critique of oppression and out of a desire to create a better society.

A World beyond Competition: Comradeship in East Asian and Russian Literatures

How should we understand these movements and connections between Russian and East Asian literatures in relation to discussions of world literature and the theories of Moretti, Casanova, and other scholars? As we see in the interactions among Russian and East Asian literatures, writers in East Asia who belong to the categories of the so-called periphery or semi-periphery in Moretti's world literature system actively interacted in the process of forging their modern form of literature. They did so by incorporating their shared cultural values, anxieties, and desires into literature; by mediating various foreign elements of literature; and by connecting with each other through their yearning for a new literature in a process of projection onto Russian literature and selective appropriation from it. If we use a model of diffusion moving from the Western European center to peripheries, we easily miss the shared humanist view of literature in modern East Asia imagined in the process of interacting with Russian literature.

Casanova hardly discusses Russian literature, let alone East Asian literature. In her theory, Russian and East Asian literatures are all supplicants competing to reach the center, that is, Paris, and attain the center's (or

international hegemon's) recognition. Casanova argues that "the unification of literary space through competition presumes the existence of a common standard for measuring time, an absolute point of reference unconditionally recognized by all contestants" (2004: 87). However, the interactions among Russian and East Asian literatures show a distinctive literary community that is hard to categorize as part of Casanova's unified literary field or universal literary standard time.

The case of Russian and East Asian literatures refutes the validity of a perspective that sees literary works as being in competitive relations tied to national literatures. Russian and East Asian literatures were not in competition but in comradeship. East Asian writers' interest in Russian literature, particularly among proletarian writers, was not motivated by a desire to gain international recognition (essentially Paris's approval) through aesthetic innovation; literature had much more important work to do, both at home and abroad. Although complicated and diverse, the Russian and East Asian literary relationship exemplifies a process of world literature that is not generated by a constant rivalry among national literatures. This relationship, as imagined and practiced in East Asian cultures, was collaborative and sympathetic rather than competitive.

Although inspired by Moretti and Casanova in terms of providing a systematic macro-picture of world literature, Alexander Beecroft suggests a more complex and inclusive model of world literature. While criticizing the simplification of complex literary systems appearing in Moretti's and Casanova's theories, Beecroft incorporates the concept of ecology in order to accommodate the various ways that literatures thrive (2015: 19). His book systemizes world literature into six categories: (1) epichoric literary ecologies (the small-scale local community where literary, mostly verbal, circulation is limited), (2) panchoric ecologies (the communities in places with small-scale polities that feature a broader circulation of literature and art and the sense of being distinct from other polities), (3) cosmopolitan ecologies, (4) vernacular ecologies, (5) national literary ecologies, and (6) global literary ecologies. These six ecologies also roughly correspond to a modern concept of the development of world history. Beecroft's contribution is to provide a way to understand the complex literary networks varying across time and space before what he calls "the national literary ecology" became dominant. What is noteworthy, however, is that although Beecroft complicates Moretti's and Casanova's core-periphery models in many respects, he still argues that the national literary ecology to which Russian and East Asian literary relations belong "corresponds very much with the ecological situation of literature as

described by Moretti and Casanova, among others" (Beecroft 2015: 35). Beecroft's argument confirms that Moretti's and Casanova's problematic views continue to exert an influence on current scholarship of modern world literature. These theories of world literature still offer no way to describe the literary relations among modern Russia and East Asia, which have had a massive historical and literary impact on world literature in the modern era.

Translation, Circulation, the International Prize System, and World Literature

Although theories of world literature focusing on circulation try to distance themselves from Eurocentric perspectives like Moretti's and Casanova's, they have difficulty navigating the ways the intercultural circulation of texts were shaped by political and economic power structures as they were established during the era of imperialism. In his book *What Is World Literature?*, David Damrosch defines a work of world literature as one that is "actively present within a literary system beyond that of its original culture" (2003: 4). This definition acknowledges the diversity of texts and the unpredictability of their travels, but it underestimates the impact that geopolitical imbalance has on the translation, circulation, and recognition of particular works and national literatures. Although quite a few literary works written in peripheral languages have been translated into other languages – which, according to Damrosch's theory, is necessary for a work to be recognized as part of world literature – there is still an enormous gap between, for example, the number of Korean translations of English literature and the number of English translations of Korean literature. More important than numbers is the fact that scholars have not discussed these translations from peripheral languages as much as they have those from European languages.

Another factor to consider, in the United States in particular, is that some readers are reluctant to read translated texts. As Gisèle Sapiro points out, "It appear[s] that when they do publish translations, publishers tend not to present them as such (it is not specified on the cover), out of fear that retailers will 'skip' them" (2004: 227). Indeed, many US publishers try to avoid including translators' names on the book cover. It is not a secret that "only about 3% of all books published in the United States are works in translation" and "in terms of literary fiction and poetry, the number is actually closer to 0.7%"

(Three Percent n.d.). This proportion is in stark contrast to that of Korea, for example, where about 30 percent of all books and about half of the best-sellers are translated works. Although the low rate of translation is easiest to quantify in relation to publication, general readers' reluctance to read translations in the United States is arguably the more important factor. If readers generally disfavor translated literature as a category of literature, it is extremely difficult for a foreign text to develop a significant readership outside its country of origin, which means that it is far more difficult for the text to be recognized as "world literature" in Damrosch's definition.

In relation to translation and circulation, the Nobel Prize in Literature demonstrates the unequal linguistic and cultural power structure of the "world" cultural sphere. One of the effects of the prize is to disseminate the winner's works internationally, and, as a result, to make the authors "actively present" beyond their original literary systems. But literary works from cultures with less empowered languages rarely win this recognition unless they have been translated into English or other European languages. Using the case of the Nobel Prize, we can understand two important issues among the many complicated aspects of the canon-making effects of prestigious international literary prizes: (a) translation cost, and (b) selection criteria. First, the cost of translation is borne unequally by internationally dominant languages and peripheral languages: translation is expensive to nondominant languages but largely cost-free to dominant languages. Most of the cost of translating Korean literary works into languages such as English and French, for example, is paid by Korean publishers, government, agencies, or writers, but the same is not true for English and French texts being translated into Korean. Furthermore, Michael Cronin correctly points out that "when the argument is advanced that the use of a *lingua franca* eliminates translation costs, what one has, in effect, is another form of transferred cost." The transferred cost here means the time and money that "the non-native speakers of a global *lingua franca*" spend acquiring and translating the lingua franca (Cronin 2013: 45).

The second problem we can see in the Nobel Prize in Literature is the importance of selection criteria. Beecroft highlights the strong Eurocentric characteristics of the Nobel Prize in Literature: of the 110 works awarded the prize between 1900 and 2013, only eight were written in non-European languages. Moreover, five of those eight were written "in Europe itself, on Europe's periphery, or while under European rule" (Beecroft 2015: 257). In addition to the surprisingly low number of non-Western awardees, the Nobel Committee demonstrates controversial standards in judging Western and non-Western literatures. Having compared two groups of Nobel citations on

Western and non-Western literatures, Julia Lovell argues that "the Nobel Committee's ambivalent acceptance of writers from marginal literatures means that writers of non-Western literatures have to do either of two things: achieve a 'universal' level of development (as defined by the Nobel Committee) or earn their exotic keep as representative of their neglected corner of the literary world" (2006: 69). The Nobel Prize and other Western literary prizes guarantee the highly visible circulation of a literary work throughout the world, yet are themselves based on Eurocentric assumptions that make it difficult to see literatures in non-European languages as anything other than peripheral. Pheng Cheah rightly criticizes theories of world literature that emphasize the global circulation of texts, arguing that "colonial education, insofar as canonical European literature had an important function in it, may have been the first widespread institutionalization of world literature outside Euro-America. Hence, world literature in the narrow sense of literature that circulates globally is historically complicit with the epistemic violence of imperialism" (2016: 18). One of the fundamental problems behind a model of world literature based on circulation is the perceptual and economic inequality built into the system of circulation – and the considerable momentum which that system gains as it is continually reinforced by highly problematic apparatuses of recognition such as the Nobel Prize.

The circulation model appeals to quantitative expansion as a solution to the problem of how to properly define the field of world literature and its development. As a way to study and teach world literature properly, Damrosch calls for more languages and more language studies on the philological level, more collaborative scholarship and teaching on the methodological level, and more pluralism on the ideological level (Spivak and Damrosch 2014: 368–70). The mechanism of inclusion/exclusion in the discussion of world literature is, however, often deeply problematic when scholars deal with non-Western texts because the possibility of expanding the canon does not solve the fundamental problems generated by the unequal power structure embedded in the sociocultural systems that have been constructed and reinforced in the modern imperialist era. To be truly inclusive in our perspectives on world literature, we would therefore need to change our perspective about what the world is.

World Literature as Process and Relation

Pheng Cheah's reconceptualization of the world as a temporal category (something that is structurally open, unlike the world as a spatial extension)

and of literature as a normative force of worldmaking provides us with an intriguing perspective and is a necessary contribution to the discussion of world literature. As he argues, literature is not a passive response that describes the world but an active force that molds the world in an idealizing or morally demanding way. Cheah's concept of the normative force of literature reminds us of the ideas East Asian intellectuals shared with each other in their interactions through and with Russian literature. Literature helped these intellectuals to perceive the world around them and construct their own lives while imagining and aspiring to a better world that would arrive in the future.

For Cheah, the literature of the postcolonial South is a good example of a normative project of world literature. As he writes, "First, decolonization is precisely an attempt to open up a world that is different from the colonial world. Second, the reworlding of the world remains a continuing project in the light of the inequalities created by capitalist globalization and their tragic consequences for peoples and social groups in postcolonial space" (2016: 194). While Cheah's theory indicates how literatures from (semi-)peripheries can justly claim their places in world literature, it also shows how existing Western European canons would have a hard time finding a place within a world literature that embraces normativity. Thus, despite its inspiring and insightful elements, Cheah's theory of world literature seems to risk becoming trapped in a reversed mechanism of inclusion/exclusion, and of historically reinforced structures of accessibility/inaccessibility.

The importance of the ethical aspect of world literature, however, can be addressed in ways that do not exclude specific literatures if we focus on the relations themselves rather than on bodies of textual production. Karen Thornber suggests, for example, that concepts like "local" and "global" can be reconceptualized by studying "intra- and inter-regional interactions among non-Western literatures," and that refocusing their practice could help scholars be more region-neutral and detached from "lingering Eurocentrism" (2014: 461). Thornber's suggestion has some resonance with Shu-mei Shih's call for an "ethical practice of comparison." Inspired by integrative world history and Édouard Glissant, Shih argues that comparative literature's ethical practice should be pursued by "setting into motion historical relationalities between entities brought together for comparison, and bringing into relation terms that have traditionally been pushed apart from each other due to certain interests, such as the European exceptionalism that undergirds Eurocentrism"; she believes that "the excavation of these relationalities" is "the ethical practice of comparison, where the workings of power is not concealed but necessarily revealed" (Shih 2013: 79).

To avoid the inclusion/exclusion mechanism in defining world literature and to be truly open to others, we should focus less on categorizing specific types of works as world literature (for example, texts that are recognized by the centers or texts that exist within the system of the center-periphery; texts that are actively present beyond their own culture; texts that have the normative force of reworlding the world; or texts that relate to specific regions and history). We need to consider world literature not as literary texts but as entangled literary relations and the processes whereby those relations appear and change. Because literature is process, it constantly alters its various relations to sociohistorical and cultural factors and values, other types of writing, other media and forms of movement, and other literary networks. World literature, I argue, is a totality of these complex relationalities and processes that continuously engender new meanings and understandings of literature and society. In this way, literature helps us understand the world not only through what it represents in its content and form, or through the way it is constructed, but also through its broad relationalities to other literatures and histories. Thus, I would suggest that we consider world literature not as a "subset of literature" (Puchner 2011: 256) or as literature that has substantial objects that we can conveniently grasp, but as a new lens through which we can better understand literary relations and their role in the world.

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PART VI

⋆

POETICS, GENRE, INTERMEDIALITY

31

Poetry, (Un)Translatability, and World Literature

JAHAN RAMAZANI

Questions of translatability have figured prominently in recent debates over world literature. In David Damrosch's pithy formulation, "World literature is writing that gains in translation" (2003: 288). This influential model usefully foregrounds how literary texts multiply meanings and readers as they circulate beyond their sites of origin. But Damrosch's definition, as I argue elsewhere of Franco Moretti's distant reading of literary waves, may have unfortunate if unintended consequences for poetry (Ramazani 2016). It is based on a distinction between works of world literature and those that "are so inextricably connected to their original language and moment that they really cannot be effectively translated at all"; they "are not translatable without substantial loss, and so they remain largely within their local or national context, never achieving an effective life as world literature" (Damrosch 2003: 288, 289). Although world literature is conceived by Moretti, Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, and others as an expansive and multilingual category, a great deal of poetry would by this definition languish outside its precincts. "Translation can never really succeed," writes Damrosch, "if a work's meaning is taken to reside essentially in the local verbal texture of its original phrasing" (291). For poetry, more than perhaps any other literary genre, "the local verbal texture" is often meaningful, even indispensable.

Granted, this isn't so for all poetry, some kinds of which are readily translated, such as narrative, epic, dramatic, balladic, and some other long-form varieties, and even some lyric poems – at least features such as their visual metaphors, tonal modulations, and shifting poetic address. According to Justin Quinn, some Cold War-era Eastern European poems, free of dense sonic effects or wordplay, were meant to be as translatable as science, such that for Miroslav Holub, "the work of translation had already begun when he was writing the Czech originals" (2015: 116), akin to the contemporary Chinese poems that Stephen Owen criticizes for seeming to "translate

themselves" (1990: 31), or the novels Rebecca Walkowitz characterizes as "born translated" (2015: 3). But are these the only kinds of poems that should qualify as world literature – a field that now gives prominence to the novel, mainly in English translation? And what of the special impediments to translating many other kinds of poetry?[1] The Greek translator David Connolly summarizes the view that "poetry translation is a special case within literary translation and involves far greater difficulties than the translation of prose" because unlike "ordinary language," its language is often "elaborate," "compact," "condensed," "heightened," and "connotational"; in it, "content and form are inseparably linked" (1998: 171). According to Paul Ricoeur, too, poetry presents "the serious difficulty of the inseparable combination of sense and sonority, of the signified and the signifier" (2006: 6). As we think about the place of poetry in world literature, it may be time to revisit such views, now that they are increasingly in dispute. At an MLA Convention roundtable on translation in January of 2017, for example, two speakers ridiculed the idea that it may be harder to translate a lyric poem than an instruction manual ("Translation in the Affirmative" 2017). In accord with a tendency in cultural studies to downplay genre distinctions, a recent book on poetry and translation asserts, "Poetry is not a special case of language; it is the ordinary case of language" (Robinson 2010: 59). Frost's dictum that "poetry is what is lost in translation" (Untermeyer 1964: 18) is now said to reflect "an essentialist definition of poetry" and "purist views of literary language" (Robinson 2010: 25; Damrosch 2003: 288). Admittedly, Frost's aphorism, like any aphorism, oversimplifies; as we shall see, some aspects of poetry translate. Even so, the translation of the poetry of poetry is often especially complex. As Matthew Reynolds notes, in prose fiction, "the most salient formal elements (paragraphs, chapters) can readily be matched without damage to descriptive meaning" (2011: 28); not so the rhythms, rhymes, assonances, alliterations, compressed wordplay, certain syntactic and rhetorical patterns, and other meaning-bearing features of form-dense poems, such as lyrics in English by Hopkins, Yeats, and Hart Crane, Louise Bennett and Kamau Brathwaite, Geoffrey Hill and Seamus Heaney.[2] Although for some years I've been tracing such anglophone poetry's travel and transnationalism, even I would concede that lyric poetry, to the extent that it is embedded in the language of its articulation, is less mobile than, say, emojis,

1 For the view that style is "the central element in the translation of poetry," see Boase-Beier 2015: 31.

2 On Yeats, see Quinn 2015: 28, and for Montale's account of Yeats as "a poet entirely untranslatable," see Robinson 2010: 13–14.

pop songs, novels, or instruction manuals.[3] The language of lyric is in some ways a bridge, in others a wall.

At the same time that the model of literature-that-gains-in-translation may need to be reconsidered because it generically skews against a great deal of poetry, polemical arguments "against world literature" (Emily Apter's phrase) that are predicated on untranslatability may also need to be recalibrated, since some aspects of even dense lyric poems circulate in translation (Apter 2013).[4] These arguments, moreover, have centered on "untranslatables," fascinating philosophical terms with no equivalents in other languages (Cassin 2014), but the questions surrounding the (un)translatability of poetry – its phonemic, syntactic, rhythmic, and other specificities in different languages – extend into complexities well beyond the lexical. Building on the recent resurgence of interest in poetry and translation, as signaled by works by Quinn, Reynolds, Peter Robinson, Jean Boase-Beier, and others, I attempt to help bring poetry studies into conversation with "world literature" (see also Jones 2011; Boase-Beier 2015 and 2017; and Polizzotti 2018: 111–28 [chapter 7]). Since this vast subject is impossible to treat comprehensively, and since poetry lives in intricacies that demand close analysis, I examine a handful of lyrics in different languages and test the "gains-in-translation" and the "untranslatability" models against poetry's language-specific and language-crossing affordances. In doing so, I hope to develop a more nuanced position that allows for both losses and gains – and for losses that are potential gains, for gains predicated on losses. And I explore what the implications of this crosshatched understanding might be for the study of world poetry.

Disaggregating Poetry's (Un)Translatability

I begin with distinctions still valuable even after decades of translation theory, made nearly a century ago by a poet-translator of poetry in Chinese, Anglo-Saxon, Occitan, French, Italian, Latin, and other languages. Complicating both the "gains-in-translation" and the "untranslatability" theses, Ezra Pound and other global modernists can help tease apart different strands of literary (un)translatability. Pound writes: "That part of your poetry which strikes upon the imaginative eye of the reader will lose nothing by translation into a foreign tongue; that which appeals to the ear can reach only those who take

3 See, e.g., Ramazani 2009. For my view of "lyric," see Ramazani 2017.

4 On the recent popularity of the concept, see Tageldin 2017. Stringent critiques of Apter include Fisk, "'Against World Literature'" (2014), developed in *Orhan Pamuk* (2018); and Venuti, "Hijacking Translation," in *Contra Instrumentalism* (2019: 53–82).

it in the original" (1968: 7). In his famous tripartite division, Pound demurs from hard untranslatability, arguing that *phanopœia*, "the casting of images upon the visual imagination," "can . . . be translated almost, or wholly, intact" (7). But Pound's two other categories encapsulate poetry's stiff challenge to the "gains" model of world literature. "*Melopœia*," in which words are charged in meaningful ways with music, can be appreciated in an unknown, foreign language, but, with small exceptions, "It is practically impossible to transfer or translate it from one language to another" (25). W. H. Auden concurs that the poetic "imagery of similes and metaphors" is translatable (it is from shared "sensory experiences" and "not from local verbal habits") but that when the "'meaning' . . . is inseparable from the sound and the rhythmical values of the words," the poetry is "rarely, if ever translatable" (Auden [1961] 1976: xv). Similarly, Pound's third category, "*logopœia*," or wordplay on connotations and associations, "does not translate" (1968: 25). Pound's triad can help begin to disaggregate facets that are too often lumped together as the blanket translatability or untranslatability of poetry. No doubt, his distinctions need to be qualified. Even visual images, for example, can be tricky – take the symbolism of what Pound thought were "natural images" in Chinese poetry, or the sometimes missed spiritual implications of wine drinking and taverns in Sufi poetry. Pound's distinctions could also be supplemented by other schemata, whether Northrop Frye's Aristotelian triad of *lexis*, *melos*, and *opsis* (the latter two rendered babble and doodle), the classical Perso-Arabic distinction between *lafz* (form, articulation, phonetic effects) and *ma'na* (idea, topic, semantic content), or more variegated models such as William Frawley's quartering of a poem's phonological, syntactic, semantic, and allusive layers (Frye 1957: 275; Frawley 2000: 258).[5] Still, Pound's translational trinity, rendered by Louis Zukofsky as "sight, sound, and intellection," is a useful point of departure ([1948] 2000: xi).

Consider briefly an example discussed in translation studies that illustrates the split between Pound's *phanopœia* and *melopœia*, the start of early twentieth-century poet Christian Morgenstern's playful "Das aesthetische Wiesel":

Ein Wiesel	A weasel
sass auf einem Kiesel	sat on a pebble
inmitten Bachgeriesel. (18)	amidst brook ripples.[6]

5 On *lafz* and *ma'na*, see below.

6 For earlier discussions, see Levý 1967: 1178–79; Gutt 1991: 381–87; and, on other Morgenstern poetry, Hofstadter 1997: 392–400.

Any semantic translation that conveys the poem's key images, like mine above, will be obviously inadequate, since the poem lives mainly in its comically rhyming form. Is a *melopœic* adaptation to be preferred to a *phanopœic* image-by-image translation, even if that requires radically changing the content, as in Max Knight's wonderful renderings, "a mink sipping a drink in the kitchen sink," or "a lizard shaking its gizzard in a blizzard" (Morgenstern 1966: 18)? Or should it be translated stereoscopically, in *phanopœic* and *melopœic* renderings? For such sound-centered poetry, the model of unitary translation falls short. As argued by Pound and another of his and Morgenstern's contemporaries, T. S. Eliot, although "we dream of an ideal translation" that does everything, we need both "literal" and "free" varieties ("The Golden Ass," [1928] 2015c: 487). Indeed, we may begin to wonder whether, for lyric poetry, multilayered translation should replace the one-to-one translational norm, what Ricoeur calls the "fantasy" or "ideal of the perfect translation" (2006: 5, 8), especially as electronic tools like hypertext can make available a menu of translational options – sonic and semantic, source and target, literal and creative. Since lyric tends to be less linear and more synchronous than genres like realist fiction or newswriting, it may be especially suited to layered, interactive forms of translation.[7]

No less challenging for the translator is the *logopœia* of homophonic wordplay, also abundant in Morgenstern's lyrics. As Auden writes, "any association of ideas created by homophones is restricted to the language in which these homophones occur. Only in German does *Welt* rhyme with *Geld*, and only in English is Hilaire Belloc's pun possible.

> When I am dead, I hope it may be said:
> 'His sins were scarlet, but his books were read'." (1976: xv)

In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, published like Morgenstern's *Galgenlieder* in 1905, Freud defends the witty condensation of *Kalauer*, or punning wordplay, denying that it is the lowest form of humor (1963: 45–47). As Julia Kristeva would go on to suggest, poetry can be seen as giving us rationally sanctioned access to the repressed, pre-referential childhood play with words as material objects (1984: 50). *Melopœia* and *logopœia* can be understood as two aspects of Jakobson's "poetic function," in which the message is foregrounded for its own sake. Long before the current debate over world literature and untranslatability, Jakobson, like Pound and Auden, confounded the polarity. He refused what he called "the dogma of

7 On nonlinearity and hypertext in translation, see Pym 2011; and Ponzio 2007.

untranslatability," arguing that many different kinds of messages can be recoded from one language to another (1987: 430). But he also set poetry apart by virtue of how in it "phonemic similarity," such as punning, among other "verbal equations," "is sensed as a semantic relationship," to the extent that "poetry by definition is untranslatable" and only "creative transposition is possible" (434).

Sounding Rumi

Let's bring Pound's distinctions into play with a more complex lyric by a poet who would seem to be an outstanding example of "world literature" understood as "writing that gains in translation" – in this case, that gains in market share and readers 800 years after his birth. Jalal al-Din Rumi, or Mowlana (our master) or Mowlavi (my master) as he is known in the Persian-speaking world, is a best-selling poet in English, despite being a thirteenth-century Muslim claimed by modern-day Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. Indeed, his transnationalism illustrates the heterogeneous body of work composed in Persian for centuries in West, Central, and South Asia, from the Balkans to Bangladesh, the Ottoman empire to the Mughal empire. Across much of the second millennium, Persian poetry's cartography and influence were vast. Ironically, even though it helped lay the groundwork for Goethe's early formulation of the idea of *Weltliteratur*, it scarcely appears in the influential academic studies of world literature by Damrosch, Moretti, and Casanova.[8]

Local detective work in my university library turned up material indications of what Rumi has gained in translation. In one of the more than 2 million copies of Coleman Barks's Rumi translations, someone has drawn a box in ink around these lines:

> This is how I would die
> into the love I have for you:
>
> as pieces of cloud
> dissolve in sunlight. (Rumi 2001: 32)[9]

On the facing page, where translated excerpts continue on the theme of love, understood in secular rather than sacred terms, someone has pressed a flower

8 On the marginalization of Persian poetry in world literature, see the first pages of my essay "Persian Poetry, World Poetry, and Translatability" (Ramazani 2019, which overlaps with parts of this chapter). On comparative literature as a possible frame, see Rahimieh 2011.

9 On library book annotation, see Stauffer 2019.

to leave its impression on the page. Such readers have been so moved that they have wanted to leave their own affect-bearing marks next to lines like "Love is the mother. / We are her children" (33). In one poem we read, "Bitter goes sweet in the mouth"; in another, "Essence is emptiness. / Everything else, accidental" (29, 31). Purveying wise sayings and memorable figurative language, such lines, circulating through greeting cards, email signature lines, T-shirts, popular songs, and other media, are consonant with the epideictic or broadly truth-telling strand Jonathan Culler has recently affirmed in lyric (2015: 307–14). Although Barks has many scholarly detractors, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak defends him for capturing something of Rumi's "mystical thrust" and largeness of mind, even if he betrays the letter of the original to do so, as did William Jones to give expression to "the sumptuous lyricism of Hafez," and Edward FitzGerald "the rebellious spirit of Khayyam" (2002: 53, 55). Arguably Barks, like Rumi's other translators, conveys something of Rumi's sagacity, parables, stories, themes, values, images, and affective energy. Although Barks's translations have had little discernible impact on the development of English-language poetry, another poet's earlier translations of poetry from "the East," Pound's profoundly influential free verse renditions of *Cathay* (1915) (an effort in Hugh Kenner's words "to rethink the nature of an English poem" [1971: 199]), similarly convey something of Li Bai's visual images, narratives, tonal shifts, and meaning, even as they abandon his intensely rhymed and tightly measured form.

But this translational conveyance can come at a cost. In assimilating Rumi, popular translators like Barks often "de-Islamize" him, in Annemarie Schimmel's verb, combing out his Muslim-specific content, such as terms like Allah and *houri*: "I avoid God-words," Barks avows, "because they seem to take away the freshness of experience" (Schimmel 2014: 28; Barks 2001: 9).[10] As Pound's example reminds us, Barks is hardly alone in freely, if flagrantly, adapting poetry to a target culture. As Lawrence Venuti concedes, "Translations . . . inevitably perform a work of domestication" (1998: 5). But domesticating translations go too far, Venuti states, if "suppressing the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, assimilating it to dominant values in the target-language culture" (31). Similarly, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak criticizes the translation of "Third World" texts "into a sort of with-it translationese" that seems fully accessible, warning of "a

10 Schimmel describes him as "the master of *ishārāt*, of allusions," in her "Mawlānā Rūmī: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" (1994: 13). More recently, see Ali 2017.

species of neocolonialist construction" (Spivak 1993: 182, 181). According to the orientalist critique that highlights asymmetries of power, Barks's de-Islamized Rumi is a colonized Rumi.

But while Barks may be an easy target, even scholarly translators such as Jawid Mojaddedi who are true to Rumi's Muslim *phanopœia* can only hint at his *logopœia* or his *melopœia*, the latter including varieties of *tajnis* (تجنیس, literally, "making homogeneous," as in wordplay, paranomasia, and alliteration) and other kinds of *lafz* (لفظ) in Perso-Arabic poetics.[11] Where discussions of the translation of poetry nitpick omissions and other flaws or focus mainly on ideological distortion, they often fail to address the constraints of language differences on even the most skilled and respectful translators. Take the facing-page, bilingual *Say Nothing* (2008), Rumi's poems knowledgeably translated by Iraj Anvar and Anne Twitty. Their volume includes one of the first classical poems I fell in love with when studying Persian literature, a ghazal on the theme of *fanâ* (فنا), the Sufi concept of annihilation, from the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabriz*. We can already hear in the strong opening *matla*, or form-setting couplet, how richly patterned and musically recursive is the Persian of Rumi's eleven-syllable hemistichs in *khafif* meter, including the repetitions and alliterations I've highlighted:[12]

کی ببینم مرا چنانکه منم
vah che **bi** rang
o **bi** neshân *ke* **m***ana***m**
Oh how nameless, how
light I am!

وه چه بی رنگ و بی نشان که منم
*k*ay **be****bi**nam **m**arâ chonân*ke*
m*ana***m**?
When will I see myself as I really am?

(Rumi 1759, *Say Nothing*, 10–11)[13]

Although the magisterial scholarly books on Rumi by Annemarie Schimmel and Franklin Lewis provide indispensable insight into the

11 But the equivalence is far from exact, since in Perso-Arabic poetics, verbal euphony in wordplay is typically subordinated to etymological, orthographic, and semantic considerations. See Carter and van Ess 2009. On *lafz* versus *ma'na*, see also Key 2018: 38; Cantarino 1975: 46–49. On figures of speech and thought in Persian poetics, including *tajnis*, see Chalisova 2009. For more detailed discussions of the varieties of *tajnis* or *tadjnis*, see Meisami 2003: 247–53, and Heinrichs 2009. My thanks to Jane Mikkelson and Shankar Nair for help with aspects of Persian poetics.

12 As Schimmel writes, Rumi prefers a strong *matla* – as if lightning "strikes him and sets him on fire"; see her *The Triumphal Sun* (1982: 52). On the *khafif* meter, see Lewis 2008: 332; he scans the (syllabic, long-short) meter thus: XxXX / xXxX / xxX // XxXX / xXxX / xxX.

13 Anvar and Twitty 2008. In my transliteration, "a" as in "stag," "â" as in "straw," "i" as in "steep." For another bilingual translation of Rumi that transliterates some of his quatrains and provides dual translations, see Shiva 1995.

poetry's thematic, imagistic, and theological dimensions, they devote much less attention to Rumi's unique poetic sound (Schimmel 1982: 52–53; Lewis 2008: 330–34). But given that how a lyric says what it says is often at least as important as what it says, the sonic texture is crucial to the distinctive poetry of a poem like this. Take its intensive repetition of a handful of vowel sounds in a pattern that partly repeats across the opening hemistich (مصراع, *mesrâ'*), which I attempt to delineate visually in a phonetic transliteration:

a e i a o i e â e a a
e e i a a â e â e a a

To some extent, these assonances shouldn't be surprising, since modern Persian has six to eight vowel sounds, close to Spanish and Arabic, but unlike English and German, which have more than twice as many. Rumi's poem intensifies the vowel repetitions in Persian to set up a resonant echo and variation across the hemistichs – an instance of the "reverberation" Fatemeh Keshavarz finds throughout Rumi (1998: 114–17). As Amin Banani puts it, Rumi displays "the strong vowel music of the Persian language" (1994: 39), and as Christoph Bürgel remarks, Rumi's poetry is "pervaded" with internal rhyme, "more so than Persian poetry in general" (1994: 57). Like other poets who have stitched their verbal patterning to the sonic structure of the specific language in which they write, Rumi creates a sound texture that is unique to Persian and irreproducible in English.

Monorhyme, assonance, and sonic repetition come more easily in Persian and seem less contrived, since the language employs three different types of syllables (consonant-vowel, consonant-vowel-consonant, and consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant), whereas English has about seventeen (Fatemi 2012: 71). Witness the *bayt* (loosely, "couplet") about the key term *fanâ*, in which that word's terminal open vowel echoes, almost enacting a *fanâ*-like dissolution, in the swirling cadences and the paradoxical wordplay and internal rhyme on *pâ* (foot or leg):

می‌شدم در فنا چو مه بی پا　　اینت بی پای پا دوان که منم

mishodam dar
fanâ cho mah bi pâ

eent bi pâ-ye pâ
davân ke manam

Annihilated, I'm foot-free, leg-free, like the moon. Here I am,
your racing, fleet-footed, foot-free runner!
(Rumi, Ghazal 1759, 1957–67: 663; my trans.)

Faced with the original's irreproducible sonority, I have ventured in translation, as do others, an inadequate sonic stand-in, alliteration. As Twitty writes in introducing her and Anvar's translation, listening to Anvar's recital of Rumi's ghazals reminded her that, as translators,

> we were entering the realm of impossibility. The richness of Rumi's sound is woven from a language that repeats its sounds and words with infinite subtle variations and glories in that; English just doesn't bend that way. It does not possess these beautifully detachable prefixes and suffixes, those rounded, open sounds that permit each word to spill over into the next, interweaving in an endless repetition. The laws and regularities of English are irremediably different, no matter how or how far they are stretched . . .
>
> (Twitty 2008: xvi)[14]

The challenges of translation are partly contextual: translating Rumi into a related language like Urdu or one with similar vowel structures, like Spanish or Arabic, might entail fewer *melopœic* losses. But as A. K. Ramanujan puts it, "it is impossible to translate the phonology of one language into that of another – even in a related, culturally neighbouring language . . . If we try and even partially succeed in mimicking the sounds, we may lose everything else, the syntax, the meanings, the poem itself" (1999: 220). Despite the West's embrace of Rumi, it is hard to see how the language-specific *melopœia* of his ghazals, as of much other sonically resonant poetry, could be thought to gain in English or German or French translation.

The connotative wordplay of *logopœia*, roughly akin to *ihâm* (ایهام) in Persian poetics,[15] also infuses this ghazal and many others like it, though again, it is largely un-re-creatable in English. Let us look at one last *bayt*, maybe the hardest in this ghazal to render in English, which deploys both *tajnis* and *ihâm* in playing on عین (*ayn*), a loanword from Arabic that should qualify for a truly globalized dictionary of untranslatables: in Persian, it means eye, same, spring, source, the best part of anything, essence, and as nominalized adjective (عیان, *aayân*), the visible, obvious, manifest:

گفتم ای جان تو عین مایی گفت   عین چه بود درین عیان که منم

goftam a jân to ayn-e mâ i, goft   ayn chebvad darin aayân ke manam

(Rumi, Ghazal 1759, 1956–67: 663)[16]

14 On the difficulties of translating the conventions of Persian poetry into English, see Davis 2004.

15 On "Ihām," see Chalisova 2004.

16 Anvar and Twitty give *meân* instead of *aayân*.

Note the huge differences between two excellent translations: Anvar and Twitty's reads, "I said: My Soul, you're the light of my eyes. / Where I am, he said, no need for eyes" (2008: 11); Franklin Lewis's reads, "I said / Friend, you are just like me! / He said / How can you speak of likeness to / the obviousness I am?" (2008: 356). Are these even recognizable as translations of the same text? In the first hemistich, *ayn* means "eyes" but also "likeness," "source," or "essence" (that is, "Soul, you are my eyes" but also "you are the same as me" or "you are my essence" or "source"). The second hemistich playfully counters meanings of the first *ayn*, asking, "What would eyes be (*ayn*), in this visibility everywhere (*aayân*) that manifests me?" or "What's a hidden essence (*ayn*), when the essence that I am hides in plain sight (*aayân*)?" It is the kind of paradoxical wordplay that is frequent in Rumi and that virtually dissolves in explanation – so many different connotations prance in what Pound calls *logopœia*'s "dance of the intellect among words" (1968: 25). Rumi is both more easily translated than many poets because of the homey soulfulness and affective accessibility of his reflections, yet harder as well, because of the symphonic layering of wordplay, sonic textures, and semantic content. As such, he both frustrates and fulfills key arguments for and against "world literature." Yes, you can make world literature of his poetry, but no, if that means literature in translation, much of the world will not receive what he gives readers in Persian. To calibrate what he gains and loses in translation, you can begin by comparing divergent translations – a frequent strategy in world literature criticism; but you also have to engage "the local verbal texture" of the originals.[17] If "world literature" is to give poetry-centered literatures their due – Persian, Arabic, Vietnamese, etc. – it needs a post-Eurocentric, language-attuned comparative poetics.

What Lives in Translation

Having drawn attention to what is lost in lyric translation even in a case like Rumi where so much is gained, I turn to a ghazal by a more recent master of the form, because it instances how even with these losses, the bridge of translation can provide vitally important glimpses into certain aspects of the poetic, social, and historical imagination in other languages. Partly in response to Persian ghazals by Hafez, Rumi, Saʿdi, and others, Goethe wrote that translation, even when techniques like monorhyme may not be

17 See, e.g., Damrosch 2003: 22–24. On comparing divergent translations, see Boase-Beier 2015: 78–81.

suited to the target language, can give us access to "the history, the legends, the ethics in general" ("Geschichtlichen, Fabelhaften, Ethischen im allgemeinen"), "the characteristic opinions and ways of thinking" ("den Gesinnungen und Denkweisen"), of another culture or time (1819: 530, 531; my trans.). Despite the marginalization of Persian poetry in contemporary world literary theory, Goethe's many Hafez-enthralled poems and his essays and notes on Persian poetry in his *West-östlicher Divan*, a capacious tome that relied on Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall's recent translations, exemplify such cross-temporal, cross-cultural, cross-lingual transport. The contemporary Iranian poet Simin Behbahani might not seem promising for an affirmative approach to translation, since an English rendering of her lyrics, *A Cup of Sin*, concludes with a rigorous 44-page afterword that explains, ironically, what the poems lose in translation: the "original music and rhythms" and "geometry" (Safa 1999: 134), generic extension and "innovation" in the ghazal (135), allusiveness and intertextual "friction" (136, 141, 144–45), "crunchiness" or "granularity" of texture (142), shifting registers of diction (143), syntactic "manipulations" (144), revisions of Iran-specific symbolism (146–64) – in short, "the linguistic, musical, literary, cultural, social, and historical embeddedness of any poem" (168). As with Rumi, this is much more than the untranslatability of certain philosophical keywords. Such candor about translation's "inescapable losses and mutilations" (174) paradoxically provides the best foundation for valorizing the impossibly possible work of translation, for it illuminates the specificities of a writer's poetics and of the resources of both the source and target languages. It can help us grasp the "work" and "dialogicality" that Ricoeur highlights in translation, as we "get beyond these theoretical alternatives, translatable *versus* untranslatable" (2006: 3–4, 10, 14).

Is Behbahani's poem about the world, "The World Is Shaped like a Sphere," or "Zamin Koravi Shekl Ast, زمین کروی شکل است, " an example of world literature? What is the ratio of losses to gains here? Recasting the poem in English free verse, Farzaneh Milani and Kaveh Safa have left aside refrain, rhyme, couplet structure, and internal chiming. But perhaps because Behbahani's *melopœia* is more austere than Rumi's, her Englished ghazal seems more adequate – suffused with Behbahani's wit, vivid imagery, defiant boldness of address, and ironic turns of thought.[18] Published in 1995 but written in 1981, when revolutionary Iran's hardening resistance to *gharbzadegi*, or westoxification, was resulting in the execution of thousands of leftists,

18 Similarly, Forugh Farrokhzad has been said to be less "language-dependent" and so more translatable than Ahmad Shamlou; see Pirnajmuddin and Medhat 2011: 1335.

including a beloved first cousin of mine, Farshad Miraftab, the poem allegorizes the violence that can come of simplistic East–West dichotomies, whether emanating from East or West. As Milani writes, Behbahani, who was "disillusioned by the revolution she had initially supported" and was horrified by "the reign of terror," had "always resisted binary modes of thinking" (2011: 169, 176).

Addressing the listener as her collaborator, the speaker wittily deconstructs in the ghazal's first part the artificial directions and meanings we impose on the globe. A sphere has no left or right; like a toy, it can be made to turn one way or another:

> It was our agreement to call this the East,
> though we could push it westward, with ease
>
> قرارتو شد با من که شرق بخوانیمش
> اگرچه توان راندش به غرب، به آسانی
>
> qarar-e to shod bâ man ke sharq bekhânimash
> agar che tavân rândash be qarb, be âsâni
>
> (Behbahani 1995: 130; 1999: 57; see Ostby 2015: chapter 1)

The poem builds on the qurʾānic aversion to divisions of East and West (Qurʾān 2:115) and warnings against exclusive adherence to East or West (Qurʾān 2:177). Yet, within this broadly Muslim context, one of the words Behbahani uses for "globe" is the emphatically Greek term *atlas-e geogrâphie* (اطلس جغرافی), from the ancient god Atlas and the science of geography: implicitly, those in Iran and elsewhere who harshly divide East from West ironically rely on a Western paradigm to do so. At the same time, the West eludes those intoxicated with it, represented as chasing after a never-reachable setting sun.

Having playfully subverted the hard-and-fast distinctions that sustain both orientalism and occidentalism, the poem turns darker midway – a poem about binary division that itself divides in half, unlike the vast majority of Behbahani's poems in this volume. Now the world is seen as a corpse that is being devoured: "The world (*jahân,* جهان) divided by a line (*xat,* خط) is a dead body (*mordâr*, مردار) cut in two / on which the vulture and hyena are feasting" (Behbahani 1995: 130; 1999: 57). In Persian, the word for "feasting," *mehmâni*, مهمانی, is a form of the everyday word for invited guests, which in a culture built around rituals of hospitality and cuisine makes the spectacle of predatory beasts feeding on carrion all the more repulsive. Despite the difficulty of conveying such culturally specific resonances in translation, perceptively outlined by Dick Davis, much else lives in Milani and Safa's rendition – Behbahani's dual vision of the globe as free-spinning sphere or as

split, moldering corpse, her literalizing the idea of the division of the world as destruction, her grotesque images of hyena, vulture, and flies gleefully sating themselves, her taunting of the addressee for complicity in murder and in death-fed celebration, her tonal shift from collaborative engagement to defiance, from playfully toying with the world as directionless globe to fiercely witnessing the world's demise as carrion. Contrary to the untranslatability thesis, these aspects of this world poem are remarkably vivid in English translation.

Translation, Phonetics, and Language Difference

That said, many lyric poems that, as we saw in Rumi, intensify a language's sonic properties and refract its connotative potential impede their rearticulation in another language, even as these impediments can paradoxically generate yet more poetry. A recent poem that code-switches between English and Hmong plays on the mutual sonic opacities between languages. In her homage to a mid-twentieth-century Hmong who was inspired by night visions to create an idiosyncratic script, Mai Der Vang plays on tonal differentiations among words, their rising or falling pitch (technically, "contour"), that are inaudible to the untrained Western ear. Her italicized Hmong words may sound phonetically the same to the outsider but have entirely different meanings:

> *Paj* is not *pam* is not *pab*.
> Blossom is not blanket is not help.
>
> *Ntug* is not *ntuj* is not *ntub*.
> Edge is not sky is not wet.
>
> On sheet of bamboo
> with indigo branch.
>
> To *txiav* is not the *txias*.
> To scissor is not the cold.
>
> (2017: 60)

Without the poem's guidance, the reader unfamiliar with Hmong would not know that the words spelled with the same initial letters sound virtually the same, and an audio recording reveals that "*ntub*" rhymes with "bamboo."[19]

19 Audio can be heard at the Poetry Foundation website, www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/91682/mother-of-people-without-script.

Various East and Southeast Asian fixed forms weave such tonal contours into the fabric of long-lived poetic forms. They prescribe a tonal pattern in addition to their rhyme and syllabic requirements, making them only partly re-creatable in English. Sailing en route to Vietnam and Burma (Myanmar) on Semester at Sea in 2016, I had my students write English-language poems that followed the metrical and rhyming patterns of these countries' poetic forms. But I soon realized that even if an English-language poem replicates the complex, staircase-like end- and internal-rhyme pattern of forms such as the Vietnamese *lục bát* (six-eight) and its hybrid with the Chinese regulated poem (*lü-shi*), the *song thất lục bát* (double-seven six-eight), schematized below, it would be impossible to reproduce in English the prescribed alternation of flat (*bằng*) and sharp (*trắc*) syllables (see Huỳnh 1996: 12–14):

Table 31.1 Diagram of the *song thất lục bát* (double-seven six-eight), with its flat (*bằng*) [F] and sharp (*trắc*) [S] syllables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1			S		F		S A rhyme	
2			F		S A rhyme		F B rhyme	
3		F		S		F B rhyme		
4		F		S		F B rhyme		F C rhyme
5			S		F C rhyme		S D rhyme	
6			F		S D rhyme		F E rhyme	
7		F		S		F E rhyme		
8		F		S		F E rhyme		F

That said, as Vang's code-switching poem and my Persian examples demonstrate, we become aware of the special qualities of one language only when we cross over into another. While Robert J. C. Young is right to remind us that the borders among languages are porous, he draws the surprising inference that "the whole point of translation is to keep languages apart," "to confirm the presumption of differences between them" (2016: 1216). Although we have noted Arabic and Greek words in Persian, among innumerable examples of translingual enmeshment, we have also seen that, at least where poetry is concerned, phonological differences between English and languages like Persian, Hmong, and Vietnamese matter. The act of translation crystallizes the capacities and limitations of our own and other languages by forcing us to grapple with linguistic and cultural difference. "Through the labor of the translator," as Naoki Sakai puts it, "the incommensurability as difference that calls for the service of the translator in the first place is negotiated and worked on" (1997: 14). The untranslatable elements of poetry can turn from a wall into a bridge if, instead of overlooking them, we examine the cultural and linguistic specificities they render visible on either side, though without letting those specificities become reified for nationalist purposes. As Rebecca Ruth Gould writes in relation to Persian poetry, "When negotiating the dialectic of translation and untranslatability, we should cherish felicitous disjunctures" (2018: 204).[20] By virtue of heightening and stretching the sonic, syntactic, rhetorical, allusive, and other features of languages, lyric poetry, in an enlarged model of world literature that engaged both its translatable and its untranslatable facets, might provide a sharper lens for cross-cultural and interlingual understanding.

Translating Syntax

In addition to phonology, poets can make vigorous use of the syntactic and grammatical features of the languages they write in, often reworking, stretching, or bending them (see Ferguson 2012: 1401–7).[21] Nor is this the case only in non-Western languages. When I first learned to read classical Roman poets like Horace and Virgil, I was dazzled by the syntactic flexibility that a highly inflected language makes possible, with case endings – rather than word order – indicating function in a sentence, thus affording inversion, bracketing, and suspension. In one variety of hyperbaton, or syntactic transposition, a noun can be widely separated from its modifying adjective. The chiastic form of double

20 Gould criticizes the untranslatability paradigm with the help of Walter Benjamin's and Lu Xun's theories of translation.

21 See Ferguson 2012: 1401–7.

hyperbaton – what classicist Stanley Hoffer calls "adjective interlacing" and "double suspension" – emerged into prominence in first-century Roman poetry, probably as a Hellenistic imitation (Hoffer 2007: 299–303). The beginning of Horace's fifth ode exemplifies its remarkable effects. When the speaker addresses the fickle Pyrrha, the "you" or "*te*" that denotes her is doubly enclosed, in a double-garland-like word picture. In Latin, "you" can appear sandwiched in the middle of the first line between the adjective "*gracilis*" and the noun "*puer*," sandwiched in turn by the adjective "*multa*" and the noun "*rosa*":[22]

Quis multa *gracilis* **te** *puer* in rosa	What slender boy soaked in liquid perfumes
perfusus liquidis urget odoribus	presses upon you amid many roses,
grato, **Pyrrha**, *sub antro?*	Pyrrha, in a pleasant cave?

(Naylor 1922: 14; my trans. and highlights)

Word by word, the first line would read "What, many, slender, you, boy, in, roses" (literally, "rose"). The concentric syntax accentuates Pyrrha's being pressed upon by the boy amid his roses, squeezing the pronoun within what encompasses it. In the third line, Pyrrha's name similarly appears toward the middle of the line to suggest her being enclosed within a cave and within the boy's amorous and odiferous attention. Because English lacks case endings, it does not afford the interlacing of double hyperbaton, which appears ninety-two times in Horace's odes (Naylor 1922: xiii). Not that anglophone poets haven't tried. An editor of *Horace in English* singles out Milton's version of the fifth ode, saying it's the only Horace translation that, as Goethe recommended, creates, beyond paraphrase or domestication, "something new, an amalgam of the foreign or alien and the native" (Carne-Ross 1996: 57). Claiming to render the poem "almost word for word . . . as near as the language will permit," Milton, who replicates something like one ring of the verbal garland, begins, "What slender youth bedewed with liquid odours" (1971: 96). But while Milton's translation has been said to come "close to achieving the impossible" and exemplifies the nourishment of one literary language by another in translation, English syntax cannot "allow for the mosaic effects of Horatian hyperbaton" (Bowditch 2011: 357, 360). Pound complained that Milton failed to recognize that "the genius of English is not the genius of Latin, and that one can NOT write an uninflected language in the same way, using the same word-order that serves in an inflected language" (1971: 179). As R. G. M. Nisbet says of Horace: "The words interact as in a miniature physical system," and unlike the syntax of what he calls "the

22 On the ode's enclosed "*te*," see Commager 1962: 51–52.

triteness and triviality of the usual English translations," "the interlocking produced by hyperbata helps to bolt the monument together" (2009: 400). Modern and contemporary poets in English, from Frost to Heaney, have absorbed the translatable judiciousness, balance, and terse wit of Horace's poetry, but there are some qualities of his verse that cannot shine in English as in Latin.

T. S. Eliot, French, and (Un)Translatability

Because poetry is often wound around the intricacies of the language in which it is written, poets like Milton and Pound have paradoxically been inspired to create forms analogous to those of the source language they are translating, thereby creolizing and hybridizing the target language's poetics. As Pound's early collaborator T. S. Eliot put it in essays on translations of Greek, Latin, Chinese, French, and other literatures, which elaborate a subtle understanding of poetry translation, the interlingual engagements of translation can provide "enrichment" and "substantial nourishment to our language," and "the transformation of language and sensibility," "the invention of a new form of verse," "a criticism of one language by another, a fertilisation" ([1916] 2014a: 222; [1916] 2014b: 493). His own translation of Saint-John Perse's *Anabase*, or, as he indicates, H.D.'s translations from the Greek, can be seen as exemplifying such translational gains for the target language. But like Pound and Jakobson, Eliot both embraces the translator's art and warns that ultimately "there is no substitute, no *adequate* translation" ([1916] 2014b: 493). Although an effective translator may make us believe that we can "really at last get the original," that a poet "has been 'translated,'" such a thing is merely an "illusion" of "translucence"; "we *think* we are closer to the Chinese" or French or Greek, but this is an effect of the creative translator's skill (Eliot 2015d: 522, 524). Translations like *Cathay* successfully render a foreign poem in "the idiom of our own language and our own time" (522), but translation is an ever-moving target: Pound created a free-verse translational idiom for his own age, but in each age poets must re-create the literature of the past for the present.

As a poet whose work was translated into many different languages in his lifetime, Eliot was especially alert to these issues. Of course, some features of his poetry must have proved translatable; otherwise, it couldn't have had such an enormous impact on poetry in many different languages – features such as its striking figurative language, sharp tonal shifts, multiple registers, embedded quotations, sordid urban landscapes, apocalypticism, religious

comparativism, polyglossia, and alternations of free with rhymed and metered verse. Yet in an unpublished 1952 letter to one of his translators, he cannily remarks:

> I must say that the poems you have chosen strike me as the most untranslatable of all my verse, since they are the most purely lyrical and the effect and meaning depend so very much upon the particular arrangement of syllables which is found in the English. You have, on the whole, made a fairly close literal translation, although it seems to me, especially in the case of the first two, that the value of the poems evaporates completely, and must evaporate completely in any translation. (Letter to R. P. Jean Mambrino, S.J.)[23]

By his own reckoning, Eliot's "lyrical" poems and passages embed meaning in, and create crucial effects by, their syllabic arrangements. To the extent that they yoke meaning and effect to specific verbal textures, the poetry of such poetry is untranslatable.

Given Eliot's skepticism toward the "illusion" of translation, his musical use of language, and his sensitivity to the different literary sensibilities embedded in different languages, it is fitting that he quotes significant chunks of untranslated text in his code-switching poems. The implication of his poetry's polyglossia, as of Pound's, is that there are some aspects of the originals in German, French, Greek, Latin, Italian, Sanskrit, and other languages that would be lost if they were translated into English. Macaronic and creolized texts, writes Haun Saussy, "do not translate, but 'migrate,' their source languages to a new target language; they cite, echo, cut, paste, recombine" (2017: 20; see Ramazani 2015). Even more remarkably, Eliot goes further and adopts a nonnative language of composition for its peculiar resources and proclivities. Of poems by predominantly English-language writers who make this leap, Milton's Latin poems are among the most accomplished, and in the twentieth century, Eliot's poems in French among the most interesting – poems Eliot regarded well enough that he included them in his slender selected canon and left them untranslated. We are used to asking whether Eliot should be considered a British or an American poet, but what of Eliot as a French poet? – a notion that warps the geography of francophony and anglophony. And what light might this example of writing in an adopted language shed on questions of poetry, world literature, and (un)translatability? After publishing his first collection,

23 My thanks to Ronald Schuchard and John Haffenden for the letter. I gratefully acknowledge permission to quote: unpublished letter to R. P. Jean Mambrino, SJ, is copyright © the Estate of T. S. Eliot.

Prufrock and Other Observations, Eliot felt he had "dried up completely" as a poet (1959: 56). Writing poems in French released the blockage, enabling him to tap into his emotions because, as he wrote to Paul Valéry, "votre langue me donne une certaine liberté d'esprit et de sentiments que la langue anglaise me réfuse" ("your language gives me a certain freedom of mind and feeling that the English language denies me") (2011: 266 and note 2). Explaining why he lived in Paris in 1910–11, Eliot said, "Depuis plusieurs années, la France représentait surtout, à mes yeux, la *poésie*" ("For many years, France had represented above all, in my eyes, *poetry*") (2017: 512, 514). While the French influence on Eliot's English poetry has often been examined – Laforgue, Baudelaire, et al. – less attention has been paid to how Eliot's own poems in French embrace French traditions and techniques built up in the language over hundreds of years. One of his self-consciously cosmopolitan but linguistically anchored poems allows us to consider how language-specific literary practices afford another way of being global that is missed by the gains-in-translation paradigm: the gains in nontranslation.

In "Mélange Adultère de Tout" ([1917] 2015f), Eliot polymorphously assumes various global identities:

En Amérique, professeur;	In America, a professor;
En Angleterre, journaliste . . .	In England, a journalist . . .

(41; my trans.)

In this self-mocking autobiography – more directly autobiographical than usual for the poet of impersonality – Eliot humorously catalogues the various roles he has assumed as a world-trotting cosmopolite, changing like a chameleon in response to each new environment:

En Yorkshire, conférencier;	In Yorkshire, a lecturer;
A Londres, un peu banquier . . .	In London, a bit of a banker . . .

Even as Eliot playfully enumerates his global identities, the poem's literary techniques enact his metamorphosis into a French poet. Long a resource in French poetry, the line-splitting hemistich structure of the medial caesura (even stronger in the *alexandrin*) helps Eliot mark structurally the turn from place to role with effects of suspension, humor, and symmetry. He follows French prosody in counting the silent or mute *e* before the caesura as a syllable (e.g., both "Amérique" and "Angleterre" are counted as four syllables) but not counting the final *e* at the end of the line ("journaliste" as

only three syllables). Repeatedly eliding both subject and verb, Eliot may take advantage of what a book-length comparative linguistic analysis shows to be the lesser proclivity in French than in English for explicit verbals and for determinate relations among syntactic elements (Guillemin-Flescher 1981: 15).[24]

Octosyllabic verse has also long been prominent in French poetry – a tradition influentially taken up by Théophile Gautier's *vers de société* in *Emaux et Camées*, a volume that enabled Pound and Eliot to shift from free verse to rhyming quatrains in the late nineteen teens. A theorist of French versification, Benoît de Cornulier, has even postulated what he calls "la loi des huit syllabes" – that in the French syllabic line, we can remember the duration and acoustic patterning of a maximum of eight syllables (1995: 47). Eliot accentuates his poem's octosyllabics through enclosed, triplet, and Gautier-like alternating rhyme. The tighter, more replicative syllabic structure of French verse, as against the looser accentual structure of English poetry, works well for Eliot's wryly snappy catalogue of his diverse occupations.

These job descriptors take a sportive turn in the middle of the poem, when Eliot names his French identity:

C'est à Paris que je me coiffe	It's in Paris that I sport
Casque noir de jemenfoutiste.	The black beret of an I-don't-give-a-damn guy.

"Jemenfoutiste" – a vulgarity compounded of four words – is obviously not an occupation in the same way as is a professor, a journalist, or a banker. Because it names Eliot's French self, it implicitly comes closest to the poem's adopted French mask. Indeed, in the poem, the poet takes on and off various masks, hats, or berets, if you will, but this activity is itself troped as not-giving-a-damn French insouciance. Elsewhere, Eliot suggests that a cosmopolite's mobile identity can be corrupt and potentially dangerous, as in the anti-Semitic portrait of a Jewish landlord, "Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp, / Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London," or of Bleistein, "Chicago Semite Viennese," in two poems that bizarrely coexist in the same volume with the French poems ("Gerontion" [2015b: 31]; "Burbank with a Baedeker" [2015a: 34]). As Mark Jeffreys puts it, "Eliot's horror of the composite self coexisted with a keen desire to make of it, for

24 For a deconstructive account of translation that builds on this text, see Lewis 1985.

himself at least, something that transcended ordinary, unified personality" (1993: 396).[25]

Despite this fear, Eliot's French mask enables him to romp through a zanily arrayed series of easily adopted and abandoned selves. The contrast is sharp, for example, between the poet as French *jemenfoutiste* and his ponderous German self:

En Allemagne, philosophe	In Germany, a philosopher
Surexcité par Emporheben	Overcome by exaltation,
Au grand air de Bergsteigleben . . .	With the air of a mountaineer . . .

Unlike in its likeness to the French compound *jemenfoutiste*, the intrusively German polysyllabic word *Emporheben* is wittily made to rhyme with *Bergsteigleben*, as if doing Hegelian philosophy were like scaling craggy abstractions. The Germanness of the German compound words, emphasized by a hypermetrical extension to nine syllables ("Surexcité par Emporheben"), seems jocular within the light swift rhythms and dandyish *jemenfoutisme* of the poem's octosyllabic French.[26] The tone is even more frolicsome in the ensuing triple rhyme and nonsense syllables:

J'erre toujours de-ci de-là	I wander always from here to there
A divers coups de tra là là	With diverse breaks for tra la la
De Damas jusqu'à Omaha.	From Damascus to Omaha.

Here, instead of touching down in a single location, the poeticity-riding versifier extends across continents. But from this peak of levity, the poem turns somber as it ventures to Africa, and from present tense to future, imagining the speaker's cenotaph displayed on the hot coasts of Mozambique, a place that promises the ultimate evacuation of identity, as the final line deliquesces to ten syllables (counting the mute *e*s):

On montrera mon cenotaph	They will display my cenotaph
Aux côtes brûlantes de Mozambique.	On the burning coasts of Mozambique.

25 On Eliot's feared "lack of identity," see also North 1994: 84.

26 It is one of Eliot's several French poems in which, as Merrill Turner notes, Eliot "combines seriousness of purpose with levity of tone" (2016: 112). She also provides a useful list of Eliot's possible mistakes, 125n7. On the nontransparency of language for Eliot and Valéry, see Marx 2002.

As Michael North puts it, "wayward and free, the speaker gravitates toward Africa, which is in this sense the place of placelessness" (1994: 84). Eliot distills and reactivates a primitivist cultural stereotype, far grimmer than French drollery or German ponderousness. Although he skids lightly among localized identities in Europe and America, to follow Rimbaud into Africa is to risk the ultimate dissolution of the Western subject. Jewish cosmopolitanism and African subjectivity mark the outer limits to Eliot's costume-shuffling globalism – limits that enable the rapid-fire circulation they help make imaginable and yet threaten. Even so, it is notable that it is in writing in a nonnative language with its specific literary techniques and possibilities that Eliot most boisterously performs his globally intersecting identities. In its carnivalesque play amid multiple selves, this is a world poem; but it is the specific formal possibilities of French poetry that enable Eliot to spin his lyric globe. Our models of world poetry should be as attentive as poets are to the distinctive literary conventions encoded in different language traditions, even when poets are consciously adopting and not more directly inheriting them.

To Domesticate, to Foreignize, or . . .?

Although I've been skirting the normative questions that dominate discussions of poetry translation, maybe the implications of such an approach are worth spelling out briefly. Is a target-oriented or source-oriented translation of poetry to be preferred? Should a poetry translation be domesticating or defamiliarizing? Such polarities, as we have seen, oversimplify. Excessively domesticating translations can bleach a poem of its particularities, but excessively foreignizing translations can rob it of pleasure. Overly domesticating Western translations of Rumi miss out on the opportunity to disrupt widespread assumptions about Islamic zealotry and intolerance, but overly foreignizing translations might risk consigning Rumi to exotic unfamiliarity. As Mark Polizzotti indicates, the production of "even less approachable translations" would only exacerbate the low interest in translated books in North America (2018: 68). So, too, in African contexts Evan Maina Mwangi observes that, *pace* much postcolonial theory, fluent translations are not necessarily colonialist, and "foreignizing translations might entrench oppressive practices and thought" (2017: 11). It seems unwise to try to resolve this question a priori, since the range of difficulties and opportunities in poetry translation varies widely, depending on the

texts, languages, and power asymmetries involved. With a poet like Behbahani, who is little known in the West, a sensitive target-oriented translation practice that focuses on imagery, tone, and rhetorical strategy might be most effective in conveying something of her poetry to readers in translation. Or it may be, as Eliot argued, that in "introducing a poem to the English-speaking public," as he did Perse's *Anabase*, greater "liberties" might be warranted to engage the reader, while later, "a more literal translation" could be appropriate ([1930] 2015g: 135).

Hybrid foreignizing-domesticating strategies, moreover, are possible. In the *West-östlicher Divan*, Goethe was already proposing a kind of translation that would amalgamate features of both the translating and the translated text (1819: 529–32). Even a target-oriented translation can, without overdoing the foreignness of the foreign poem, occasionally remind readers of the "remainders" of translation – a word, a technique, a sonority that does not carry across – or of the embeddedness of the translator in a particular cultural context.[27] Such is the effect in Heaney's *Beowulf* of "a bleeper" like the Northern Irish word *thole*: the etymological linkage to Old English reminds the reader of the translator's (and also the reader's) cultural locatedness (2001: xxv). Interlingual code-switching can also function as such a bleeper, as in Ugandan Okot p'Bitek's embedding of Acholi and semitranslated words in his code-switching English self-translation of *Song of Lawino* (Ramazani 2001: 176–77). Venuti highlights a translation's capacity to "cultivate a heterogeneous discourse, opening up the standard dialect and literary canons to what is foreign to themselves, to the substandard and the marginal" (1998: 11). A recent carnivalesque example is Daljit Nagra's heteroglot retelling of the *Ramayana* (2013), which draws on a dizzying variety of South and Southeast Asian versions of the epic poem and, in leaps from low to high, slang to magisterial English, as well as typographical play with shifting fonts, breaks open the heterogeneity of the narratives and of the overlapping and colliding Englishes of the English language. Translations like Heaney's, Okot's, and Nagra's confound the debate over whether it is more important to be true to the original's meanings or to the target culture's literary values, whether to produce a crib or a poem in its own right. As Karimi-Hakkak writes, we need to get beyond the "scholarly-versus-creative binary" (2002: 37). Both kinds of translations, and variations in between, have their uses and should more often be produced side by side.

According to Kwame Anthony Appiah, "what counts as a fine translation of a literary text – which is to say a taught text – is that it should preserve for us the

27 On the "remainder" in translation, see Venuti 1998: 10–12, 95–96.

features that make it worth teaching" (1993: 816). By this criterion, lyric poems would seldom qualify without comparative attention to the original, at least for those of us who think that to teach lyric poetry as poetry, you must attend to its intricacies. The exception might be a work like FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* (Appiah's example), Pound's *Cathay*, Eliot's *Anabasis*, Heaney's "Anything Can Happen," and others by Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, Kenneth Rexroth, Okot p'Bitek, A. K. Ramanujan, John Ashbery, and Anne Carson – the kind of translation that, in Appiah's words, "aims itself to be a literary work, a work worth teaching" (817).

Translational Poems on Translation: Agha Shahid Ali

To conclude this preliminary effort to nudge the discussion beyond the current polarization between world literature's advocates and detractors, between supporters and opponents of the untranslatability thesis, let us turn once more to what lyric poetry itself has to say on the subject of translation. Yet another ghazal speaks to issues of translatability, poetry, and world literature. Written by a Kashmir-born poet who was the leading proponent of the form in English and who wrote his dissertation on Eliot, Agha Shahid Ali's loosely patterned "Arabic" begins with a couplet that can be spun in either direction of the debate:

> The only language of loss left in the world is Arabic –
> These words were said to me in a language not Arabic.
>
> (2003a: 24)

Against those supposing that languages are neutral technologies, the first line stakes a claim for the untranslatability of the grief in Arabic. It would seem to support the idea that some aspects of poetry, such as the *melopœia*, *logopœia*, syntax, and literary techniques peculiar to poems in German, Persian, Hmong, Vietnamese, Latin, French, and other languages, are lost in English translation. After all, more than a millennium before Frost, Eliot, Pound, or Jakobson, the Abbasid polymath al-Jahiz wrote:

> Excellence with regard to the art of poetry is limited to the Arabs and those who speak the Arabic language. Poetry cannot be translated and does not render itself to transmission. And whenever it is converted into another language its concinnity (*nazm*, [harmony of elements]) is broken, its meter is rendered defunct, its beauty evaporates, and that something that inspires wonder and admiration simply absents itself. (Jackson 1984: 101)[28]

28 For more on this passage, see Kilito 2008: 21–37, 41–42. On the question of contemporary translation of Arabic into English, see Creswell 2016.

Already in the early 800s, a literary critic was warning about what poetry loses in translation.

That said, like Pound, Eliot, and Jakobson, al-Jahiz, who praised the wisdom and eloquence of Persian literature, acknowledged that "some of these works have increased in excellence" in translation (Jackson 1984: 102; see Cooperson 2008). Indeed, the second line of Ali's ghazal sides with those who would emphasize interlingual transmissibility, since it wryly suggests that the speaker has learned something about Arabic's uniqueness in a language other than Arabic. As we have seen, some features of poetry can survive and even thrive in translation – *phanopœia*, narrative, poetic address, tonal shifts, epideixis, affectivity, not to mention fixed forms like the ghazal, haiku, *lục bát*, and octosyllabic line, all of which can be studied and taught in secondary languages. Ali rewrote "Arabic" as "In Arabic," a ghazal that now maintains the form's penultimate rhyme, or *qafia* – here, on *business/pitiless*. "In Arabic" mocks the poet's protestations on behalf of a language in a language other than itself:

> This much fuss about a language I don't know? So one day
> perfume from a dress may let you digress in Arabic.
>
> (Ali 2003b: 80)

While the internal rhyme on "digress" may fulfill the *qafia*, it also echoes Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" ("Is it perfume from a dress / That makes me so digress?") and so wryly stitches this particular expression of longing for Arabic even more tightly into English (2015e: 7).

"Arabic" and "In Arabic" champion the specificities and powers of Arabic: the language of qur'ānic prophecy, of Muslim prayers in many different countries, of literary traditions that range from the medieval *Laila and Majnoon* to the contemporary Darwish, and of poetic forms such as the ghazal and the *qasida*. Ali also praises the "delicate calligraphy" in Arabic that may ironically temper the anti-iconographic tradition it is supposed to foster, as in miniatures where it looks like "Kashmiri paisleys tied into the golden hair of Arabic" (24). At the same time, Ali glances at how Arabic travels beyond Arabic, as we have seen in Rumi and Behbahani's poetic play on Arabic loanwords, their allusions to the Qur'ān and the hadith, and in their ghazals refashioned in the Persian tradition, which added to the ghazal's form key canonical features such as the *matla*, *takhallos*, and discrete *bayt* (Blachère and Bausani). Displaying the profound stimulus to creativity that is translation, Ali's poems on Arabic stray from a narrow focus on Arabic:

> When Lorca died, they left the balcony open and saw:
> his *qasidas* braided, on the horizon, into knots of Arabic.
>
> (2003a: 24)

Along with the Spanish poet, the poem "Arabic" enlists an international and multilingual array of names, including Anton Shammas, the Palestinian poet, novelist, and translator who writes in Arabic but also in Hebrew, and the Israeli writer Yehuda Amichai, who pioneered colloquial Hebrew in poetry. While centered on Arabic, this ghazal written in English by a poet who grew up in Kashmir, hearing Persian and Urdu poetry often quoted in his family home and speaking Arabic-peppered and Persian-infused Urdu (Chase 2011), displays the transnational convergences enacted by "world" lyrics even when they live in their "local verbal textures," themselves often translocated. For all the differences between the languages in which poetry is written, these differences do not result in monadic isolation: it is ironically because of them that poets are drawn to mixing, bridging, re-creating, and translating them. Persian lyrics that resound with Arabic, Hmong tones in an English-language poem, English syntax stretched to mimic Latin, French adopted by an Anglo-American modernist for its peculiar freedoms, strictures, and techniques – these are among the interlingual braidings by which poetry verbally enacts the worldhood of the world.

Having named a variety of writers from other cultures, Ali ends "Arabic" with a *takhallos*, or poetic signature, that splits the poet's own name across two languages:

> They ask me to tell them what Shahid means –
> Listen: it means "The Beloved" in Persian, "witness" in Arabic.
>
> (2003a: 25)

Although the concluding signature couplet would seem an opportunity for locating one's uniqueness in a unitary name, here, a Kashmiri American poet translates his name into English, only to cleave that supposed self-identity in two different languages, mediated by a third. It is as if he were himself the refractions of translation. With apologies for debasing a hallowed poetic convention in critical prose, perhaps I could conclude in the spirit of the ghazal's signature line. As someone whose given name, Jahan, is also a commonplace word in Persian for the "world," yet in English becomes a proper name only, I think we would do well to follow "Shahid," glorying in the untranslatable peculiarities and affordances of languages as illuminated by poetry, and at the same time embracing his suggestion that a language's signature capacities are often revealed in the interlingual junctures of

translation. If we want a model of world literature that will be adequate to lyric poetry, it needs to incorporate the translingual emphasis on linguistic specificity in poems by Ali and other writers. With the help of a language-sensitive comparative poetics, perhaps the world of world literature can be made large enough to encompass and render visible both the translatables and the untranslatables of lyric poetry.

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32

The Reinvention of the Novel in Africa

NEIL TEN KORTENAAR

Literary history commonly accounts for the African novel in one of two ways: by emphasizing how novelists rewrite or subvert a genre imported from Europe or by stressing the continuities with a tradition of oral verbal culture that precedes colonization and continues to exist alongside literate culture. These are powerful explanatory frames that correspond to a division always at the heart of literary history: is the novel as a genre something new that arose at a particular point in time in response to historical circumstances (and therefore closely associated with capitalism, the modern nation-state, mass literacy, or democracy), or does it represent a continuation of prose narrative traditions as old as language and found everywhere? The two accounts of African literature serve easily understood needs: critics, like the novelists themselves, have had to assert the dignity of Africans in the face of European racist condescension. Each of these approaches, however, favors certain texts and ways of reading, and ignores the bulk of African novels and much in those novels that deserves critical attention. This chapter will propose that we approach African literary history not from the big picture of world-systems theory, where Africa appears as the periphery that must respond to cultural forms disseminated from the powerful core, nor from the nationalist sense that what is most significant about African literature is an unchanging kernel, derived from oral forms, that is then defined as essential to Africa, but rather from what is idiosyncratic about the novels produced there. What may be most distinctive about African novels is neither their relation to Europe nor something self-consciously African, but something newly invented.

It is true that the genre we recognize as the novel came to Africa as a result of a cultural diffusion inseparable from imperialism and globalization. It is impossible to think of novels without print literacy and the resources of printing, without education and the leisure to read, and without the cultural

capital bestowed by the academic study of literature. To understand novels, we must understand their cultural resonance in the middle of the twentieth century. Throughout the vast areas of the globe where English and French were written, the novel appeared as the epitome of literature, what writers should be writing and what national literatures required. But when Africans conceived the desire to write novels such as they had read, they could not but be struck by the glaring blindness of European novels to Africa. The genre seemed only able to imagine the continent as a void. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, for instance, depicted Africa as a world of noises and shadows, an empty screen onto which is projected Europe's unconscious. Chinua Achebe's 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart* counters Conrad's modernist romance with realism, creating characters explicable in terms of psychology and cultural principles and comprehensible to novel readers everywhere. Achebe also wrote his novel as a classical tragedy in order to counter the tragic farce with which Joyce Cary had depicted Africans in his novel *Mister Johnson*. Okonkwo, Achebe's protagonist, is a classic overachiever with a debilitating flaw who strives against the implacable transcendent force of history. Nevertheless, the impulse to write back to Europe and correct the false image of Africa, identified by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin as a primary responsibility assumed by Africans when they undertook to write novels, does not go far in accounting for the novels that Africans have written, including *Things Fall Apart* itself.

Graham Huggan in *The Postcolonial Exotic* and Stephanie Newell in her survey of West African literature have been critical of the way Achebe's novel assumed Western readers for whom Africa needed to be explained and justified. By contrast, Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie, and Ihechukwu Madubuike, the authors of *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*, celebrate Achebe for rejecting modernism and writing for Africans. The truth is that Achebe's realism names and describes a world for new Nigerian citizen-readers as well as for novel readers anywhere.

The novel in Africa, even when written in English, French, or Portuguese, also inherits from traditional oral forms of verbal culture in vernacular languages, such as the hunter tale, the trickster tale, or the praise poem, as well as a radical mixing of genres arguably typical of African verbal art. The style of *Things Fall Apart*, laden with proverbs, self-consciously imitates the plain and repetitive style of folk tale. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o writes that his novel *Matigari*, based on folklore motifs and written in Gikuyu, was often read aloud to groups of people and so itself entered oral culture. But if oral culture explains the plain style of Achebe,

the rhetorical pyrotechnics of Wole Soyinka, the allegory of Ngugi, and the phantasmagoria of Amos Tutuola, then we need something more than oral culture to account for the great variety of African literature. Different writers adopt different elements from oral culture, and these choices still need to be explained.

Accounts of literary history that rely on tracing origins, be they European or African, often start by assuming what African literature must be. What if we allowed ourselves to be surprised by African literature, noting the many ways it does not conform to anything that might be predicted in advance? I propose that, instead of taking for granted that there must be African novels, that they must have a particular relation to Europe or express an Africanness, we recover the strangeness of the novels produced in Africa. Neither the global diffusionist nor the nationalist model of continuity could have predicted Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de Violence*, or Dambudzo Marechera's *House of Hunger*.

Africans did not invent the novel from scratch. When they encountered it, the genre appealed to them for many of the same reasons that it appealed to others around the world: for the way it made it possible to imagine, and so to question, the nature of modern large-scale society, the nature of historical change, and the relation of the individual to society. As Evan Mwangi explains, Africans were not writing for Europe but for Africans when they used the genre to ask questions about the state of which they were new citizens and to explore new understandings of the city, gender, marriage, and sexuality. If these have also been questions posed by novelists elsewhere and at other times, Africans have arrived at original and unique answers. Their answers reveal not just something about Africa, but something about the genre itself, including things that might otherwise remain invisible about the novel in Europe and elsewhere.

In this chapter, I will focus on three novelties that appear in African fiction and that are without precedent in Europe or Africa: (1) the emphasis on the point of view of the parent as opposed to the child; (2) the upward tilt of the narrative focus in order to take in the head of state; and (3) the setting in a fictive state that resembles the author's own but is called by a different name. Other novelties may be more obvious – the magic realism that has come loose from history; spirit possession as an account of character; the village that remains resolutely the center of its world and resists its integration into the state – but I want to focus on differences in narrative form that are a matter of degree and invite comparison rather than more absolute

differences that could appear to reinforce the idea of an extra-textual African essence.

The Parental Perspective

As mentioned, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, written on the eve of Nigerian independence, can be regarded either as an example of extroversion (Eileen Julien's term), writing back to European novels, or as translating vernacular orality into English, but neither explanation is sufficient to account for the particularity of this historical novel. In order to write about the colonial encounter, a moment sixty years in the past and thirty years before he was born, the twenty-six-year-old author invented a middle-aged patriarch who kills a foster son and as a result drives away his own son. Achebe could have written a *bildungsroman* and cast the conflict between colonizers and colonized as one between tradition and modernity that the hero must negotiate. (He did just that in the sequel, *No Longer at Ease*.) He could have written about warriors or lovers, struggle and desire. Instead he invented a father who brings down his machete on a son in a climactic scene of sacrifice and then accidentally shoots another man's son, two cataclysms that critics have been hard-pressed to relate either to precolonial ways or to colonialism, the novel's ostensible subjects.

Six years later, after Nigeria's independence, Achebe wrote again from a father's point of view about the colonial encounter before he himself was born. In his most complex novel, *Arrow of God* (1964), the authority of Ezeulu, priest of the patron god of Umuaro, meets bitter rivals within the village group and a grave challenge in the form of the new colonial administration. Yet the novel focuses more on Ezeulu's relation to his sons than on his relations to the colonizers. The priest derives his authority from his vaunted fidelity to his father, but when he looks at his own disappointing sons he sees no obvious successor. Ezeulu "sacrifices" one son by sending him to the missionaries for training and suffers a mental collapse after his favorite son dies suddenly while possessed by an ancestral spirit, a death that appears causally unrelated to the main narrative. Once again, the colonial encounter is narrated as a paternal tragedy centered on a failure of succession.

If, when writing about the past, Achebe chose to focus on fathers *qua* fathers, it must be that he felt that something in the colonial encounter resonates with the experience of parents. Ten years before *Things Fall Apart*, in 1948, the year the National Party came to power in South Africa and began to institute apartheid, Alan Paton had also turned instinctively to the parental

point of view in his first novel. *Cry, the Beloved Country* retold the parable of the Prodigal Son as the story of a Zulu pastor who travels to the city in search of his wayward son. Two fathers – one white one black – have their sins of omission visited upon their sons. The Rev. Stephen Kumalo and James Jarvis, neighbors who barely know each other in rural Natal, meet by chance in Johannesburg where they have each gone in search of news of a son and where they discover that one son has killed the other.

The South African novelist Dan Jacobson points out that European literature has almost always dealt with family relationships from the child's point of view and almost never from that of the parents. This is especially true of novels. A play like *King Lear* may be about fatherhood, but novels about family were about "being a child and having a parent or parents, and about growing out of them, not about being a parent and having a child and having it grow out of you" (1985: 139). Certainly, the novel in Europe before 1950 preferred the coming-of-age story, the marriage plot, the existential crisis, and the adventure tale. The only examples of novels centered on the point of view of the parent, George Eliot's *Silas Marner* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, prove the rule: they are both about foster fathers who find a daughter or son, and they challenge the very idea of a novel: the one, short enough to be a novella, feels like a parable or fairy tale, and the other, epic in scope, strains at all the genre's bounds. Balzac's *Le Père Goriot*, named for the Lear-like tragedy of the title character, inevitably transfers its attention to young Eugène Rastignac, newly arrived from the provinces and on the make in Paris, who must decide whom to love in order to further his career.

In African literature, by contrast, the parental point of view is central, and it is not limited to the paternal. Achebe's fellow Igbo, Buchi Emecheta, wrote *The Joys of Motherhood*, an ironically titled account of a mother who devotes her life to her nine children but dies alone and mad. As a child in Cape Town, Sindiwe Magona, the daughter of a black domestic worker, had found *Cry, the Beloved Country* among a white family's discards (*To My Children's Children* [1990: 26]), and in 1998, in the wake of the Amy Biehl murder in a Cape Town township, she rewrote Paton's novel as *Mother to Mother*, a fictional address by a black African to a white American whose daughter has been killed by her son. Madisa tells the mother of her son's victim, "Now, your daughter has paid for the sins of the fathers and mothers who did not do their share of seeing that my son had a life worth living" (Magona 1998: 3). Motherhood in fiction, no less than fatherhood, involves the loss of a child.

How does one account for the fascination with the parental point of view displayed in African literature? It is true that procreation and the goal of

becoming an ancestor are cultural values found throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* imagines having joined the ancestors and waiting in vain for the sacrifices of his descendants. But culture does not explain Paton or the fascination with the parental point of view in white South African literature more generally, from Pauline Smith's story "The Father" and *The Beadle*, through Herman Charles Bosman's story "Mafeking Road," to later novels by Daphne Rooke (*Ratoons*), J. M. Coetzee (*The Master of Petersburg*), and Nadine Gordimer (*The House Gun*). Nor does the cultural significance of progeny account for the way all these texts focus on the loss and even the death of a child.

A better explanation for Paton and Achebe's focus on fathers might be that both writers posed as standing at the origins of a tradition. They each wrote as if no one had written about Africa before them. There had been many South African novels before *Cry, the Beloved Country* and a few West African novels in English before *Things Fall Apart*, but both traditions had been characterized by repeated fresh starts. In South African literature in English, every twenty years there would appear a *sui generis* first novel by a writer who could not, it seems, match that first effort. Olive Schreiner, Sol Plaatje, Pauline Smith, William Plomer. Paton could be regarded as one more in that broken line, but the success of *Cry, The Beloved Country* made it impossible for all who came afterward to pretend to be the first. Achebe's precursors in West Africa, J. E. Casely Hayford and R. E. Obeng, also wrote one novel each, as if a single novel were all that a writer might have inside him. Another precursor, Amos Tutuola, went on to write eight novels but has usually been treated by critics as if he wrote one novel eight times. Achebe, by contrast, younger when he wrote his first book than any of these others, set out not to write a book but to become a writer, someone with a literary career. He is the first West African novelist to have a character who has read a West African novel (Obi reads Tutuola in *No Longer at Ease*), a mark of the fact that he thought in terms of a literary tradition that he was in the process of defining. At some level the young author of *Things Fall Apart* imagined himself the father of African literature. To judge by the many later writers who acknowledge themselves his heirs (including notably the women writers Emecheta and Chimamanda Adichie) and the many later novels in which characters read *Things Fall Apart*, he made good his claim.

What is striking about all the novels and stories concerned with the parental point of view, including those by Achebe, Paton, Magona, Smith, Bosman, Coetzee, and Gordimer, is that they are about a child who dies, who is killed, or who kills. Ousmane Sembène's novella *Niiwam* features a father who carries the

corpse of his dead son on his lap as he crosses Dakar by bus seeking how to bury it. We might go so far as to say that the point of view of the parent who loses a child *is* the parental point of view, or, at least, the only parental point of view capable of narration. Jacobson writes that parenthood resists the narrative imagination because, while childhood stretches before the child almost interminably and memories of childhood haunt the adult ever afterwards, the emotions associated with parenthood vanish along with the children who occasioned them and who are so quickly replaced by completely different beings: "the physical and moral passions of parenthood, which any parent knows to be as deep, as startling, as much a remaking of the whole self as any other, turn out also to be as evanescent as the constantly self-transforming bodies which had aroused them" (1985: 138–39). Perhaps the only way to capture the feelings aroused by parenthood – so difficult for memory or the literary imagination to seize upon – is to freeze the child in memory, such as happens when the child dies. The violent deaths of sons in the novels of Paton, Achebe, and Magona are extreme versions of what Jacobson calls the "vanishing act" performed by all children when they grow up and leave their childhood selves behind. Although not set in Africa but in nineteenth-century Russia, Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*, about a father seeking the truth about his dead son, a revolutionary who had rejected all fathers, is exemplary in this regard.

The paternal point of view is not so much a function of an author's position at the putative origins of literary history as of his relation to past, present, and future more generally. By contrast, the point of view of the child (both in the sense of heir and successor and in the sense of infant), the special purview of Freud and psychoanalysis and so common in fiction, involves learning that one is born in a world not of one's own making and that one carries one's parents within. The child who learns these lessons has to define who he or she is in relation to the social world around him. The young have to choose their path or learn the limits on their choices. For the parent, on the other hand, social roles are already given: parents will remain forever what they have been, even when the death of a child forces a reevaluation of their life. The future belongs to another, or if the offspring is dead, may be closed altogether. The parental point of view asserts patterned recurrence rather than open-ended possibility and constant verities over newness, but also, paradoxically, entails cataclysm rather than progress, absolute rupture over incremental change. (A lone exception, *Tsotsi* by Athol Fugard, rewrites the redemption of a parent by a child found in *Silas Marner* but featuring South African gangsters.) The parent's question "Who will remember me?" is less

fixed, less known, and less under one's own control than the question of the former child, "What do I remember?"

In the past few decades the parental point of view has also become a prominent feature in fiction and cinema from Europe, North America, Australia, Israel, and India: among novels, think of Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Chang-Rae Lee's *A Gesture Life*, Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*, Russell Banks's *The Darling*, Ian McEwen's *The Child in Time*, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, Lionel Shriver's *We Need to Talk about Kevin*, David Grossman's *To the End of the Land*, Akhil Sharma's *An Obedient Father*, and George Saunders's *Lincoln in the Bardo*. In all these cases, the parental point of view is made possible by a contravention of the natural order: a child that dies before its parent, a parent who kills or harms a child, or the child who becomes a monster.

The parental point of view in African fiction emerged from a particular nexus of colonialism, gender, and race. The parental point of view, which requires the death of a child in order to be narrated, becomes meaningful to novelists when the parent's pain resonates with an anxiety in the culture at large. Paton and Achebe transposed the external conflict between self and other, white and black, or colonizer and colonized into a domestic conflict as intimate as the relations of parents to their children. Race also plays a large role in the novels listed above by Morrison, Lee, Roth, Banks, and, arguably, Lessing (see the sequel *Ben in the World*). Transformations of the appearance and experience of the world within the living memory of a single generation are now as prevalent in the rest of the world as they were in mid-twentieth-century Africa. The emergence of the parental point of view in fiction outside Africa, as in Africa, reflects the accelerating pace of social change and the increasing sense of a future that will not resemble the past.

It is too much to say that the parental point of view was diffused from Africa around the world, though Paton certainly was read throughout the English-speaking world in the middle decades of the twentieth century and Achebe is still the black African author that readers outside the continent are most likely to be familiar with, but it is the case that Africa pioneered it. To appropriate a point made by Jean and John Comaroff about theory from the South, if we are to understand the future of world literature, we would do well to look at African literature.

The Top-Heavy Novel

If Achebe at some subconscious level posed as the father of African literature, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Soyinka, and Ngũgĩ are its Big Men. All three

deliberately put themselves at the center of national history and acted as spokesmen for their continent and for the race. Senghor, the poet and philosopher of Négritude, became president of Senegal. Soyinka violently took over a radio station, attempted his own peace process during the Nigerian Civil War, instituted a guerrilla theater, and vociferously denounced apartheid in South Africa and corrupt tyrants everywhere. Ngũgĩ has played a similarly outsized political role in Kenya with his activist community theater and his persona as a public intellectual. The nation-state provided a stage for these writers in an amplification of scale not found among writers elsewhere in the world with the possible exception of Eastern Europe.

Soyinka wrote a series of plays about African dictators, colossi who also walk across the national stage as if across their living rooms: *Kongi's Harvest*, *From Zia with Love*, *A Play of Giants*, and *King Baabu*. These plays observe the scalar proportions of Shakespeare's history plays, even if, because they are modern and scorn the principle of the divine right of kings, they are more satirical than anything in Shakespeare or his contemporaries. Soyinka's dictators migrated from the stage into the pages of books when French Africans pioneered the dictator novel: Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de violence*, Sembéne Ousmane's *Le Dernier de l'empire* (about a Senegalese president like Senghor who goes missing), Cheikh Alou Ndao's *Mbaam Dictateur*, and Henri Lopés's *Le Pleurer-rire*. Ahmadou Kourouma's *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, the supreme African example of the dictator novel, is a series of praise songs performed for Koyaga, the president dictator of the Republic of the Gulf, who has learned indispensable lessons from his fellow dictators. In Sony Labou Tansi's novel *La Vie et demie*, a dictator called the Providential Guide rules Katamalanasie in Central Africa and is pitted in a struggle crossing generations with a rebel leader called Martial. Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* is an English-language addition to the genre, Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* a late example from Kenya.

The African dictator novel has a parallel in Latin America, where Miguel Angel Asturias wrote *El Señor Presidente*, Alejo Carpentier *El Discurso del Método*, Gabriel García Márquez *El Otoño del Patriarca*, and Augusto Roa Bastos *Yo, el Supremo*, all about fictional dictators, and Mario Vargas Llosa wrote *La Fiesta del Chivo* about Rafael Trujillo, the actual dictator of the Dominican Republic. Indira Gandhi, the Indian prime minister who declared a state of emergency, figures as a major character in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, and his novel *Shame* is an allegory about Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the general who overthrew him, Zia ul Haq, in Pakistan. Ismail

Kadare's *The Successor* is about an Albanian dictator like Enver Hoxha. African fiction was therefore not unique in elevating the narrative focus to reach the head of state, but we can say that this innovation is neither a response to Europe nor a continuation of traditional narrative, but something modern that arose in response to postcolonial conditions in the global South.

The elevation of the narrative focus to take in the level of the head of state remains rare in European and North American fiction though increasingly common in cinema and television, which have inherited from drama rather than from fiction in that regard. Once again, the African novel's difference from the European makes evident something about the novel as a genre that might not otherwise be visible. In order to take in the figure of the dictator, African novelists had to alter the narrative focus associated with the novel in Europe and to lift its natural downward cast. Erich Auerbach famously argued that the mimetic drive in the Western literary tradition had worked to *lower* the social focus of narrative attention. While Shakespeare considered that only kings and nobles had stories worth staging and the working classes were fit merely for comic relief, the new genre of the novel consistently tilted its social lens downward, to include merchants, domestic workers, and criminals, the gentry rather than the nobility, the bourgeois, and finally those who must work for a living. The novel took for its subject such distinctly unliterary fields as domesticity, poverty, and labor. European novels could only crane upward as far as the wealthy bourgeois and end-of-the-line aristocrats, and, even there, they strongly favored those below the very wealthiest or the highest placed. Scenes of war the European novel presents from the perspective of soldiers or civilians, not that of kings or generals. Only when turning to the distant past have twentieth-century novelists like Robert Graves, Mary Renault, Gore Vidal, or Hilary Mantel been able to write about emperors, presidents, revolutionary leaders, or other Great Men makers of history. The lone exception proves the rule: Anthony Trollope's *The Prime Minister* concerns a reluctant compromise prime minister who heads a Coalition ministry notable for having no policy. There "was, in truth, nothing for him to do" (1930: 324). This political vacuum is not a sign of incompetence nor a crisis but rather the way that the Victorian novel folds the political into the mid-level quasi-domestic realm that it prefers.

The European novel's focus on the middle and criminal classes, extended downwards by late nineteenth-century naturalism to include the working classes, coincided with the great historical movements to enfranchise ever more segments of society. The genre was not interested in the history made

by great men but rather in social and cultural history. The novel's focus on the experiences of people whose names would not figure in historical annals is also why it appealed to readers and writers in the colonies. We have already mentioned that Achebe's realism asserts the humanity and dignity of Africans. The democratic impulse in fiction was related to the same human rights perspective appealed to by demands for colonial self-determination.

In most of West and Central Africa, independence had been achieved without violent struggle by 1960. The new citizens were asked to accept that the law instituted by the colonizer governed the transfer of sovereignty to their postcolonial successors. Something in African literature changed, however, after 1966, the year that military coups overthrew Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, the First Republic in Nigeria, and the Kabaka of Buganda. Suddenly, as constitutions and legal foundations were abrogated and heads of state fell, it became possible to extend the narrative focus *upward* to include the head of state. The past no longer explained anything. Instead there was an open-ended state of exception where the law was forever being founded anew. As a result, African political novels could reside before or outside the law in a way that Western novels could not. They were also able to consider an aspect of power that had interested Shakespeare but that Western novels have largely ignored: the way that a person inhabits absolute power and is in turn inhabited by power. Charisma, rivalry, succession struggles, and the violence of institutional power, all known in Western societies, could not be treated easily in the Western novel, which focused on society as restrained by the law. Where Western novels considered totalitarian regimes, the emphasis was on how the violence and uncertainty felt to ordinary people, not, as in Africa or Latin America, on those whose sovereign authority decreed the law.

Fictive States

With the elevation of the lens of the African novel to take in the highest strata, other alterations to the genre had to be made: giants require a larger stage, one with less fine-grained definition than that normally provided by realist novels. Second-generation African novels, that is, those after 1966, were often set in anonymous or pseudonymous fictive states, in every significant way like the authors' own but called something different or not called anything at all. The convention of the fictive state can be found in Kourouma's *Les Soleils des indépendances* and *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, Lopés's *Le Pleurer-rire*, Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de violence*, Soyinka's *Season of Anomy*, Achebe's *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the*

Savannah, Mongo Beti's *Remember Ruben*, and Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow*. Other African texts whose settings cannot be located on a map include Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* and *Matigari* by Ngũgĩ. That most African novels continue to be set in states with an extra-textual existence does not affect my point: that, in the African imagination, it became possible to imagine another republic called Kangan, Songhai, Katamalanasie, the Ebony Coast, Nakem-Ziuko, Congheria, or Kanem, or not called anything at all.

Once again, by its difference the African novel teaches us the limits of the genre as developed elsewhere. Novels set in England commonly feature fictive streets, schools, towns (Barchester, Coketown, Casterbridge, Rummidge), and counties (Loamshire, Barsetshire, Wessex), but it is impossible for an English writer to set a novel in the present in a state in every important way like England but not called England. If English counties form a series characterized by substitutability, it is because the nation extends itself evenly within national frontiers: every part of England is as much England as every other part. Fictiveness at the level of English counties is made possible by the specificity of the nation. The nation of the author is the one thing for which there can be no fictive substitute: national consciousness is what European and American novels presume.

In European and North American literature, the boundary between levels at which fictiveness is possible (the street, the school, the village) and levels where it is not (the state) is the boundary between the private and the public. The nation is a public stage and cannot have a fictive substitute, but below that level, autobiographical elements often must be rendered fictive in order to allow the private sphere to be represented in public. The familiar modern splitting of the subject into public and private depends on the fixed and shared identity of nationality. The European realist novel, even when apparently concerned with domestic relations or the psychology of the individual, presumes the public identity of nationality – fictional characters can be private citizens because they are citizens.

African fiction sometimes reverses the proportions associated with the novel elsewhere and retains the real-world names of subnational spaces while rendering the state anonymous or pseudonymous. Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les Soleils des indépendances* features two fictive West African republics, the Ebony Coast and the socialist republic of Nikinai, which have been superimposed on a real territory of the Mande called Horodougou. In Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie*, the names of three contiguous states, Katamalanasie, Pamarachi, and Chambarachi, that currently divide the primeval forest among them are all the author's inventions, but the "pygmies" of the forest

are identified as Batsoua, which the novel's only footnote confirms is an authentic name in the world outside the novel (1979: 97). Okri's *The Famished Road* is narrated by Azaro, an abiku spirit-boy who travels between the human and the spirit realms. Neither the town to which Azaro's family has migrated nor the colonial territory in which it is located is identified – they are not part of Azaro's identity. The only geographical location named in the novel is Ughelli, the birthplace of Azaro's father, which can be found on published maps of Nigeria.

The capacity of African states to have fictive equivalents in the novelistic imagination is a function of the irrelevance or foreignness of colonial state institutions. One of the Batsoua in *La Vie et demie* explains that the earth has no other name but forest. He does not understand borders, which come from "là-bas," the world of the city and of the state, along with a whole series of habits designed to tame the body: "the habit of reading, talking, listening, obeying superiors – regulated like a watch by education" (1979: 108, my translation).

The unreal or mimic nature of the state in Africa was already an implication of the anonymous and pseudonymous African territories that formed a staple of European and American novels by Céline, Waugh, Naipaul, Updike, Bellow, and Boyd. But these were all settings alien to the author and the protagonist; they indicated where the mental map of Western-trained travelers broke down. What is new when African writers themselves invent fictive states, settings that resemble in every essential way the author's own nation, is that the author and his protagonists care deeply about them. Okri's magic realism returns obsessively to the state it has left unnamed: "Our country is an abiku country," declares Azaro's father. "Like the spirit-child, it keeps coming and going. One day it will decide to remain" (1991: 479). This invitation to read Okri's novel as a comment on the "country" testifies not just to the difficulty that the nation-state has being born but, more importantly, to the nation-state's eternal return.

The African novel set in a fictive state is never indifferent to the *idea* of the state. The characters in such novels are, if anything, more defined by their citizenship than are characters in European realist novels. The fictive states in *A Man of the People*, *Anthills of the Savannah*, *Season of Anomy*, and *La Vie et demie* are inhabited by resolutely political animals willing to die or even to kill for their countries (though not for their borders). They need a public and political stage in order to work out the redemption of the collective, and only the state provides such a stage. In the fictive African state, there is,

paradoxically, only public life. State citizenship is of burning concern precisely because the state is not a guarantor of identity. There can be no self-contained private realm because there is no secure public realm. Where Trollope folds the political into the domestic, Achebe and Soyinka fold the domestic into the political.

Once again, it must be noted that the phenomenon of the fictive state is not limited to Africa but also found in Latin American and Caribbean novels. Macondo, the village setting of *Cien Años de Soledad*, is located in an unnamed state. So is Garcia Marquez's *El Otoño del Patriarca*. The same convention makes possible such Caribbean islands as George Lamming's San Cristobal and the Isabella of V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*. Benedict Anderson has famously argued in *Imagined Communities* that nationalism, the vivid sense that *this* place differs from other places, first developed in colonial Latin America among a creole elite who became aware that their careers were shaped by colonial borders and a secular pilgrimage to the capital. Such nationalism found expression in realist novels. In spite of Anderson's thesis, however, it is in the nature of states based on colonial borders, such as those in Latin America and Africa, that novelists can invent fictive generic versions of the state.

In the British, French, or American novel the nation-state is so inevitably a part of the background as to be unquestioned and even to seem transparent. In Africa after 1966, however, the state became at once questioned and opaque, precarious and therefore uncannily visible. *Anthills of the Savannah*, *Season of Anomy*, and *La Vie et demie* are parables that can be generalized to the continent as a whole. They are not about the particular nation but about the state as such: any state.

Conclusion

This chapter assumes two principles associated with the discipline of comparative literature: (1) to know African literature one must know more than African literature, and (2) to understand the novel anywhere, one must understand the African novel. The study of the African novel shows what the novel form is capable of and, by implication, the limits of the form elsewhere. This chapter is also a defense of empirical literary history that starts from the corpus of texts themselves. One can learn more about a body of literature by noting patterns among texts and asking what they mean than by assuming relations to other bodies of literature or a socio-historical relevance given in advance.

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33

The Return of Realism in the World Novel

HAMISH DALLEY

If postmodernism was ever an adequate concept for describing the novel in a global context, it is no longer. This chapter explores a definitive "return of realism" in contemporary novels concerned with the frontier spaces of the formerly colonized world – though it remains debatable whether the current prominence of realism is a properly *new* development, reflecting an actual increase in the volume of realist literature, or an older one, intrinsic to postcolonial writing, that is only now becoming the subject of sustained interest (Esty 2016: 318–19). Whatever the case, it is undeniable that the mistrust of realism that has shaped a great deal of postcolonial criticism since the 1980s no longer describes the ethical imperatives, political objectives, or formal characteristics of many twenty-first-century novels. After outlining the premises upon which realism has often been critically dismissed, I spend the bulk of this chapter advancing three claims. First, contemporary realist novels are based on a complex model of fictional truth-telling that entangles ethics and epistemology. Second, world realist novels share aesthetic features that can be described as allegorical insofar as they treat narrative elements as symbolic exemplars of abstract phenomena. Third – as befits their status as *world* texts – these novels interrogate the structural features of the modern world-system. The "return of realism," as an era-defining trend in world literature, thus names an ethical-epistemological-aesthetic project to excavate the repressed violence of world-making processes, bear witness to suffering, and register ambivalence about the moral viability of modernity's social forms.

Realism is a notoriously slippery word. As Fredric Jameson observes, it is not easy to analyze a concept that is put to such "multiple and sometimes contradictory uses," and which has over time been defined by opposition to a bewildering array of rival terms (2012: 475). This chapter straddles formalist and non-formalist approaches, identifying an emergent realism in a nexus of

ethical-epistemological-aesthetic constructs mediating contemporary novels' engagements with global themes. What is at stake here is not exactly the relative prominence of aesthetic elements traditionally associated with "realistic" representation – what might be called "Flaubertian" or "Dickensian" writing. Rather, the "return of realism" concerns a set of discursive maneuvers (that include but are not limited to the tropological) for signaling an ethic of epistemological responsibility: "my novel stands before the tribunal of truth, because its subject is too important to get wrong." This construction locates the realist novel within the public sphere as a contribution to evidence-based debate about matters of collective interest. Realism links "text" and "world" to position the novel as a space of civic engagement and democratic reason (Said 1983). Aesthetic and thematic resemblances thus constitute a contemporary realism without hard-and-fast boundaries that is increasingly important to world literature.

Anti-Mimeticism and the Postcolonial Novel

In the last decade, a number of critics have raised questions about the hostility often directed toward literary realism (Lazarus; Sorenson; Andrade; Dalley). The aesthetic and theoretical trends that dominated twentieth-century literature often defined their innovations *against* realism, which they attacked as a superseded form that was, at worst, complicit with the epistemic violence of empire. Central to this critique was the claim that realism in its nineteenth-century heyday was the aesthetic instantiation of Eurocentric progressivism. The argument presents realism as the "literary equivalent" of Europe's "secularization and modernization" project, contributing imaginatively to the "creation of a new space and a new temporality, a whole new realm of measurability and Cartesian extension, . . . measurable clock time, . . . the infinite geometrical grid . . . homogeneity and equivalence" (Jameson 1985: 373). Through such epistemic effects, the realist novel allegedly made the world thinkable as a totality governed by a unified temporal system (Siskind 2010: 346), subject to a supposedly objective and secular (but, in fact, partial and ideological) empiricism (Said 1978), and thereby enabled metropolitan subjects to perceive distant societies as historically retarded and available for conquest (Fabian 2002; Said 1994: 64, 75).

The latter half of the twentieth century saw postcolonial critics, therefore, privilege the political promise of aesthetic experimentation, finding anti-authoritarian potential in what Adorno called "the shock of the unintelligible" (Bloch et al. 1977: 180; see also Gikandi 2012: 309). Magical realism

was invited to carry the burden of the avant-garde because it allegedly disrupts secularization and opens epistemic space for anti-rationalist thought and supernatural causation "in the name of plurality" (Faris 1995: 180; see also Slemon 1988; Cooper 1998; Ashcroft et al. 2007: 119). Homi Bhabha influentially tasked postcolonialism with breaking from "mimeticism." Against the "realist problematic" of plausible representation, he argued for reading practices focused on "disturbance[s] in narrative enunciation," attuned to "the process by which narrative authority and control is lost, precisely because the very objective of narrative – its plenitude, its signification of a unitary real – is jeopardized in the articulation of the scenarios of colonial fantasy" (Bhabha 1984: 116). Concerned with texts' "politically interested" and rhetorical dimensions, this approach "bracket[ed] as undecidable the question of their epistemological adequacy" (Lazarus 2011: 124–25). The result was that even as it freed African, Asian, and indigenous literatures from the limitations of ethnographic interpretation (Achebe 1988a; Quayson 1997: 2), postcolonial studies tended to position them as heirs to "the modernist turn away from historical realism," making them responsible for articulating "a critique of the West from outside its political, epistemological, economic or cultural borders" (Elias 2001: 241, 188).

Whatever its merits as a mode to celebrate postcolonial literature's formal innovations (Esty 2016), critical anti-realism no longer reflects – and never fully did – the ethical and aesthetic priorities of many non-metropolitan writers (see Spillman, Anjaria, 2012). Realism persisted alongside anti-mimetic experiments throughout the twentieth century. In many newly independent nations, literature was often constructed as a space to give voice to the oppressed, challenge neo-colonial elites, and, through the novelist's role as "teacher," assert the dignity of precolonial history – all of which presume some kind of mimeticism (Achebe 1988b: 40–46). In the past two decades, writers across the world have built on this foundation, tipping the pendulum further toward realism with an influential discourse of ethical responsibility that enjoins authors to "truthfully" narrate the crises of the interconnected globe. As Ulka Anjaria observes, twenty-first-century literature manifests a strong "realist impulse" in the form of "a new textual engagement with the contemporary world . . . a more stripped-down and less ostensibly self-conscious aesthetic," and "a new political urgency in both nonfiction and fiction writing alike" (2016: 278). The result is that, as Jed Esty concludes, "the question of realism has clearly re-emerged . . . as vital to readers, writers, and critics of the global novel" (Esty 2016: 319) – opening

space to explore the contours of a new discourse affirming realism as, above all, an ethical imperative.

Thinking Contemporary Realism

What makes contemporary formulations of realism distinctive is the tight connection they draw between authors' *ethical* responsibilities and an *epistemology* that treats fiction as a space for evidence-based reflection on actual events. This discourse bears the stamp of at least two late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century historical processes: the growing salience of revisionist histories that unearth forgotten instances of imperialist violence, especially against indigenous peoples; and the construction of the writer as a potential witness to suffering – including humanitarian violence in which he or she is historically implicated (see Ganguly 2016). As novelists have engaged with, for example, genocide on the Australian frontier, apartheid in South Africa, or civil war crimes in Nigeria or Sri Lanka, the moral seriousness of the subject matter has framed an implicit "injunction to verisimilitude."

The entangling of ethical and epistemological registers can be seen in a 2015 "exchange" between the Nobel Prize-winning novelist J. M. Coetzee and Arabella Kurtz, a clinical psychologist. Coetzee, discomforted by Kurtz's apparent privileging of the "subjective truth" of psychoanalysis, declares his belief that we have an obligation to "distinguish between things that really happened in the past and things that did not." He goes on to explain:

> I am sure that my dogged concentration . . . on the ethical dimension of truth versus fiction comes out of my experience of being a white South African who late in life became a white Australian and, in between, lived for years as a white in the United States, where whiteness as a social reality is more masked than in South Africa or Australia but is still there. That is to say, I have lived as a member of a conquering group which for a long while thought of itself in explicitly racial terms and believed that what it was achieving in settling ("civilizing") a foreign land was something to be proud of, but which then, during my lifetime, for reasons of a world-historical nature, had to sharply revise its way of thinking about itself and its achievements, and therefore to revise the story it told itself about itself, that is, its history. (Coetzee and Kurtz 2015: 74, 77–78)

Coetzee's remarks conjoin race, identity, historical responsibility, and truthful representation in a construction of authorial responsibility. Cherished narratives – like the self-serving lies of the apartheid regime to which Coetzee alludes – have been attacked and unmasked in many postcolonial settings.

Against this background, ethically reflective writers have asked what they owe to the oppressed: what is an "adequate," "just," or "realistic" depiction of the world we live in?

Epistemological adequacy is thus a persistent anxiety for contemporary realists. In 2013 I interviewed Rohan Wilson, author of two novels about the colonization of Tasmania. Like Coetzee, Wilson framed his project ethically, as a "sombre task . . . to examine what it was about our culture that enabled the whole of society, from top to bottom, to turn itself towards genocide" (Dalley and Wilson 2014: 137). For Wilson, that task involves deep reflection on how his version of the past aligns with available evidence, historiographical debate, and social contexts shaped by ongoing oppression:

> I've always hoped that my writing went beyond naïve retellings by questioning what it means to be writing about the past at all, what it means to be a white writer appropriating a black voice, what it means to believe your writing can straightforwardly describe the past as it actually happened.
> (Dalley and Wilson 2014: 139)

Contemporary novels are routinely marked by such avowals of representational responsibility. The preface to Gil Courtemanche's *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2003), set during the Rwandan genocide, declares it to be "fiction" that is "also a chronicle and eye-witness report," populated by characters who "all existed in reality" (vii). Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (2000) opens with an author's note explaining the "political time and historical moment" of the Sri Lankan Civil War, the setting of its "invented" story "similar" to what really "took place" (vii). In her 2009 novel about Nigerian advanced-fee fraud, Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani intersperses the narrative with genuine examples of successful scams. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has presented her novels publicly, in articles and TED Talks viewed by millions, as attempts to correct misperceptions of Africa (2008, 2009). The effect of this insistent rhetoric is to construct an ethical bridge between intra- and extra-textual realms, encouraging readers to approach novels *in terms of* their correspondence to a reality presumed to be accessible to some form of shared understanding.

The epistemological implication of this norm is that there must be an extra-diegetic horizon of the factual against which the plausibility of the novel can be judged. This function is played by "the archive," a term I use to refer to the corpus of "evidence" constructed as the foundation upon which a novel's claim to plausibility stands. It is common for contemporary novels to be framed by para-textual associations to archives. Margaret Atwood, discussing *Alias Grace* (1996) – a historical novel quilted (in her recurring metaphor) from

contemporaneous writings about its nineteenth-century protagonist – offers a formula that might stand for this general role of the archive:

> I felt that, to be fair, I had to represent all points of view. I devised the following set of guidelines for myself: when there was a solid fact; I could not alter it ... [E]very major element in the book had to be suggested by something in the writing about [the] times, however dubious such writing might be; but in the parts left unexplained – the parts left unfilled – I was free to invent. (Atwood 1998: 1515)

Because records are always fragmentary and partial, the author must recognize that multiple versions of events need to be placed in context: "For each story, there was a teller, but – as is true of all stories – there was also an audience; both were influenced by received climates of opinion" (1515). Reading the archive, therefore, means thinking like a professional historian, using judgment to produce plausible interpretations of evidence that is, in principle, also available to others.

Such a critically minded realism does not assume that reality, past or present, is transparently accessible, but rather constructs it as the (imperfectly graspable) object of reasoned reflection. Novelists often foreground this reflective process within the work itself, making the bibliography or author's note a common paratextual appendage of the contemporary novel. Some go further; for example, after the New Zealand author Witi Ihimaera was accused of plagiarism for being overreliant on unidentified quotations and blurring the line between fact and imagination in *The Trowenna Sea* (2009), he added actual footnotes to *The Parihaka Woman* (2011). An illustration of the supreme importance accorded to the archive occurs in Richard Flanagan's historical novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), in which the protagonist, an Australian prisoner of war on the Siam-Burma railroad, preserves at great risk to himself the sketchbook of a soldier murdered by Japanese guards. This relic preserves a traumatic experience that demands remembrance from survivors. "Memory is the true justice," as one soldier declares, "So that's why [records] should be saved" (217). Given such an attitude, it is unsurprising that contemporary novels have been judged successful – or not – based on whether they handle their sources with sufficient reverence.

The corpus of twenty-first-century realism I am describing is formally varied but nonetheless shows aesthetic commonalities derived from its ethical-epistemological base. For the members of the Warwick Research Collective, "world-literature" of the "(semi)peripherality" is characterized

by "varieties of numinous narration – including magical realism, irrealism, gothic and fantasy" (WReC 2015: 57). They are right to the extent that much contemporary fiction looks different from the realism of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, I argue that it is more productive to think of contemporary realism as a type of allegory that squares novelists' commitments to plausible representation with fiction's essential inventiveness. The theories of Georg Lukács – which have seen a symptomatic efflorescence of interest in the past few years – are useful here (Esty 2009; see also Sorenson 2010; Spillman 2012). Like many contemporary writers, Lukács conceptualized realism in epistemological terms, defining it as a method for de-reifying mystified social relationships and unearthing the humanistic dimension of historical change. For him, critical realism works by deriving imaginary characters and events from historically attested groups and processes, presenting fictional objects as exemplifications of abstract concepts like class, nation, or revolution. Thus, a novelist exploring an historical event may create a set of characters that each "represent . . . *one* of the many contending classes and strata," mapping the dynamics of a given period through the personal interactions of imagined individuals (Lukács 1962: 47). Understood as "tailor-made exempla" corresponding to the evidentiary exempla of the archive (Rigney 2001: 25), fictional elements are in this sense at once imaginary *and* realistic insofar as they adhere to the epistemological contract of plausibility and perform a functional role in elucidating an historical period.

Lukács's canonical example was Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814), in which the contending forces of English colonialism and Scottish resistance are personified as rival military leaders, between whom the protagonist – who signifies historical inevitability, the human embodiment of Hegelian synthesis – mediates (Lukács 1962: 57–58). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has offered a contemporary formulation of this aesthetic, stating that when composing her Nigerian Civil War novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) she "wanted to have a number of characters" from different social positions "so that I could come close to having a portrait of the dynamics of race and class and gender [of the time] and, even more importantly, how the war complicated these dynamics" (2008: 51). As the examples explored below demonstrate, this critical realism is allegorical because it depends on the logic of metaphor, erecting a dualist aesthetic structure in which readers shuttle between narratives of particularized, imaginary individuals and abstract models of allegedly de-reified historical developments. The novel becomes a space for engaging, through empathetic investment in the lives of others, with public debates about the ethical and political problematics of the contemporary world. The result is a collective

allegorical mapping of the modern globe, which is drawn by the world novel as a systemically uneven totality built on a substructure of violence.

Frontiers of Realism: Problematizing the World-System

To what ends, then, are directed the "return of realism"? For all their diversity of setting and subject, it is possible to discern a shared critical ethos subtending the contemporary world novel. At the broadest level, these novels map the outlines of the world as an imagined totality very different to the convergent, limitlessly progressive, tendentially homogeneous structure described by proponents of globalization (Brennan 2008: 40–42). The world of these novels is shaped by the logic intrinsic to capitalist modernity that produces unified, unequal structures experienced in temporally and socially uneven ways in different places (WReC 2015: 12). These works narrate the emergence of uneven unity from imperialism, as the infinitely varied social formations that have developed across human history are forcibly integrated into (without necessarily being destroyed by) global networks initially centered on colonizing states, and then "virtualized" as the circulation of material and symbolic objects under the "new technologies of globalization" (Ganguly 2016: 24). These texts "approach the world-system as partially, potentially describable in its concrete reality."

> But, recognizing the historicity of both subjects (their own style as part of an enduring literary modality) and objects (global capitalism as a moving target of representation), they invite their publics to grasp the world-system, via its local appearances or epiphenomenal effects, and not to imagine it as a foreclosed or fully narrativized entity. (Esty and Lye 2012: 285)

The "return of realism" therefore sees world novelists engage with the material dimensions of global existence, seeking in the structural contradictions of the universal system openings to other worlds.

Lukács's model of classical realism posits a homology between the awareness of history-as-change and the progressive temporality of modernity's self-imagining: time as dialectical synthesis tending toward convergence. According to this view, classical realism makes progress imaginable as the lived experience of subjects inhabiting a rationally comprehensible world:

> [T]he historical characterization of time and place, the historical "here and now" . . . means that certain crises in the personal destinies of a number of

> human beings coincide and interweave within the determining context of a historical crisis . . . It is always a fate suffered by groups of people connected and involved with one another; and it is never a matter of one single catastrophe, but of a chain of catastrophes, where the solution of each gives birth to a new conflict. (Lukács 1962: 41)

Contemporary realism, by contrast, attests to the failure of this dialectic to account for all locations in the world-system, especially with regard to imperialism and settler colonialism, the "zero-sum" limit-case of forced assimilation (Wolfe 2013: 257). As Frantz Fanon famously said of French Algeria, colonial frontiers are characterized not by the rational synthesis of contradictions, but by violent intrusions, unpredictable reversals, and the advent of radical newness as "certain 'species' of men" confront and displace other "'species' of men" (Fanon 1965: 27). Lorenzo Veracini has argued that frontier temporality operates less like Lukács's line than a "palindrome," a mirror-construct in which time stretches forwards and backwards from a moment of conquest when indigenous history (supposedly) ends and the settler's begins (Veracini 2010: 100). Palindromic temporality pivots around zero-moments of radical, unpredictable discontinuity – Columbus's arrival in the Caribbean, the Voortrekkers' seizure of the Transvaal – that puncture and invert the continuity of dialectical change. Colonial narratives are disturbed by formal tensions generated from this intersection of linearity and temporal irruption, producing contradictions in which, for instance, the settler can be at once an intruder *and* citizen of his colony (108; see also Calder 2011: Turner 2011). Because genocide has almost always failed to eliminate indigenous peoples, and colonial incorporation is always incomplete, the frontier persists across time as "a structure not an event" (Wolfe 2006: 388), a zone in which the world-system's expansion is deferred and spatiotemporal homogeneity is distorted.

Frontiers, thus, function as sites where the ethical project of witnessing challenges the normalization of uneven development. Rohan Wilson's two historical novels are a good illustration of this effect, as they trace how frontier violence was systematically mystified as the Tasmanian colony was economically integrated into the British empire. *The Roving Party* (2011) begins with the tail-end of the Black War in 1829, narrating how white pastoralists waged a genocidal military campaign against Indigenous resistance. This conflict is observed from the "middling" perspective (Lukács 1962: 33) of Black Bill, a historically attested Aboriginal man kidnapped and raised by settlers. Recognized by neither side as black or white, Bill functions as the allegorical embodiment of the settler-colonial encounter, bearing witness – as

an expert on Aboriginal and settler societies – to the material signs that make the frontier a social relationship inscribed on the landscape (Wilson 2011: 26). Progressive synthesis in this context is precluded by each side's irreconcilable claims. The members of the settler posse insist that Bill renounce all sympathy for their victims (168) – promising to "shoot every last black hide on this mountain" (78) – while the leader of the Indigenous resistance curses Bill with sterility (the literal end of *biological* continuity) for siding with his enemies (233–34). Wilson subverts closure by leaving Bill's predicament unresolved, and when the story resumes forty years later in *To Name Those Lost* (2014), he shows that while the genocide has been forgotten, its structural effects remain – written, for example, on the land, now green with the "fur of regrowth" that signals the *absence* of Aboriginal firestick farmers (2014: 56). The latter novel explores how imperialism draws frontier spaces into networks of commodity exchange in a process that de-realizes capital production. Money in this context is a means to abstract value from primitive accumulation and erase past bloodshed. The novel becomes a way to resist colonial mystification, drawing attention to the (literal and figurative) blood staining the money earned from colonized land (100), and ending with a call to remember the "debt" owed to "those lost who lived for others" (295). Colonial value-accumulation, thus, ceases to point toward anticipated realization as profit, becoming instead a signifier of the deferral of time at the settler-colonial palindrome's center.

Narrating the world-system's emergence as a process of genocidal frontier-expansion encodes modernity as an era of trauma. In the texts reviewed here, traumatic consciousness takes the form of Walter Benjamin's Angel of History, gazing melancholically at the growing "pile of debris" upon which modernity has been built (Benjamin 1968: 258). In *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), Richard Flanagan offers an image of this accumulative process in the form of "the Line," allegorizing the Siam-Burma railroad – built by slave labor as part of Japan's World War II strategy – as a symbol of the anti-humanism intrinsic to linear progressivism: this "great epoch-making construction of our century" signifies "the moment when we [Japanese imperialists] and our outlook become the new drivers of world progress" (104–5). The imperial telos – "the whole world under one roof" (112) – is short-circuited by the novel's sympathetic investment in the Line's human victims. Flanagan finds in Australian prisoners' deaths an alternative anti-linear construction of time as a circle: the Zen *maru*, sign of illusion and non-reason, the symbolic refutation of the Line's tyrannical optimism. In this novel, the *maru* reconfigures human activity as an ephemeral phase in deep history,

delegitimizing all attempts to sublimate murder for geopolitical purposes that are, in the absence of teleological rationalization, meaningless:

> In the end all that was left was the heat and the clouds of rain, and insects and birds and animals and vegetation that neither knew nor cared. Humans are only one of many things, and all these things long to live, and the highest form of living is freedom: a man to be a man, a cloud to be a cloud, bamboo to be bamboo.
>
> [. . .]
>
> For the Line was broken, as all lines finally are; it was all for nothing, and of it nothing remained. People kept on longing for meaning and hope, but the annals of the past are a muddy story of chaos only. (270)

This traumatic consciousness disavows the epistemic violence of political abstractions that prefigure real destruction. Flanagan's circular, melancholic temporality – like the knotty discontinuities of settler-colonial memory – serves as a reminder that the linear time of past-present-future is a construct serving the interests of history's winners (see Baucom 2005).

What lies at the heart of this anti-progressive vision is a humanist counter-narrative (ambivalently) skeptical of the configurations of global modernity – in particular the *metropolis*, *nation*, and *border*, those entwined "cultural artefacts" that have proliferated alongside the spatiotemporal totality of the globe (Anderson 2006: 4). Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2013) critiques the claustrophobia of modern subjectivity, a generic status to which her characters accede phenomenologically via interpellation in macro-historical phenomena like war and migration:

> *This* was the problem and would be ever after, the block on which she sometimes feels her whole being stumbled: that he (and so she) became so unspecific. In an instant. That the details didn't matter in the end . . . [S]he'd stopped being Folasadé Somayina Savage and had become instead the native of a generic War-Torn Nation. Without specifics . . . After that, she simply ceased to bother with the details, with the notion that existence took its form from its specifics. Whether this house or that one, this passport or that, whether Baltimore or Lagos or Boston or Accra, whether expensive clothes or hand-me-downs or florist or lawyer or life or death – didn't much matter in the end. (106–7; original emphasis)

The subject "without specifics," like the interchangeable nodes of an urban network, belongs to the imaginary that Ian Baucom calls "actuarial," classing objects according to their "typical or average character" as exchangeable

units of common sets (104). Traumatic consciousness resists typification while at the same time invoking the allegorical potential of individual lives to signify collective experience (Baucom 2005: 129–32). Thus Flanagan insists that his suffering POWs are "not typical of Australia" (2013: 182), and Selasi explores how racism dehumanizes in particular, *individual* ways. At the same time, as Ondaatje points out, one typical story can bring down an edifice of exculpatory lies. "One victim can speak for many victims," and the representation of "a specific person" – a "distinct personality" – can challenge epistemic as well as literal violence (Ondaatje 2000: 176, 184).

Within the world-system, the frontier's relational "other" is the national/imperial metropolis, an important chronotope of literary realism since the nineteenth century. For the Balzacian narrative of classical realism, movement to the capital initiates the process by which rural subjects relinquish their romantic attachment to particularized lifeways – what Selasi calls "specifics" – and become pragmatic participants in capitalism. Recalcitrant world novels lever open the ethical fault lines of this process, offering a critical rethinking of the metropolis under globalization. Chris Abani's *GraceLand*, for example, tells the story of a young Nigerian in Lagos trying to make a living as an Elvis impersonator, literally assuming the white mask of economic success in a city defined by the wild extremes of wealth and poverty produced by neo-colonial dependence (2004: 8). Elvis is the postcolonial twin of Balzac's Lucien Chardon, systematically losing his faith that individuals can succeed unless they acquiesce to a corrupt and violent social order. As Elvis's friend "The King" explains, countries like Nigeria are trapped in poverty by their subjugation to the institutions of global capital:

> Let me tell you how de World Bank helps us. Say dey offer us a ten-million-dollar loan for creating potable and clean water to supply rural areas . . . First dey tell us dat we have to use da expertise of their consultants, so dey remove two million for salaries and expenses. Den dey tell us dat de consultants need equipment to work . . . so dey take another two million. Den dey say we cannot build new boreholes but must service existing one, so dey take another two million to buy parts. All dis money, six million of it, never leaves de U.S. Den dey use two million for de project, but is not enough, so dey abandon it, and den army bosses take de remaining two million. Now we, you and I and all dese poor people, owe de World Bank ten million dollars for nothing. (280)

Abani's novel reworks Balzac's narrative for a twenty-first century in which the structural oppression of the neocolonial metropolis makes the notion of individual liberty quixotic. The irony of his protagonist's persona –

performing, in "whiteface," as the great American singer who arguably appropriated African American music for personal profit – highlights the ongoing significance of race to globalized inequity, unmasking the lie of capitalism's claim to have transcended "premodern" forms of oppression.

Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) takes this analysis to its conclusion, connecting metropolitan development to internal colonialism. Her representation of contemporary India examines how postcolonial states demarcate national borders by violently abjecting ethnically, religiously, and economically typified others. Since financial deregulation in 1992, Delhi and other large cities have been transformed into nodes of consumption where neoliberalism and Hindu fundamentalism intertwine. For the national project of universal commoditization, the poor and non-Hindu are extraneous to the exchange value that has become the only criterion of worth:

> Skyscrapers and steel factories sprang up where forests used to be, rivers were bottled and sold in supermarkets, fish were tinned, mountains mined and turned into shining missiles. Massive dams lit up the cities like Christmas trees. Everyone was happy.
>
> Away from the lights and advertisements, villages were being emptied. Cities too. Millions of people were being moved, but nobody knew where to.
>
> "People who can't afford to live in cities shouldn't come here," a Supreme Court judge said, and ordered the immediate eviction of the city's poor. "Paris was a slimy area before 1870, when all the slums were removed," the Lieutenant Governor of the city said . . . "And look at Paris now."
>
> So surplus people were banned. (Roy 2017: 101–2)

Roy focuses on marginal experiences belying this claim of universal happiness. In Kashmir, on the nation's border, the brutality of neoliberal ethno-nationalism is plain. To maintain the aura of a Himalayan "Switzerland" commodified as a honeymoon destination (103), the state unleashes a campaign of terror seemingly intended to provoke Orwellian permanent war, justifying military expenditure and surveillance of Muslims. The representative exemplar of the alliance of neoliberalism and Hindu fundamentalism is "Gujarat ka Lalla," the former Chief Minister of Gujarat who presided over sustained economic growth *and* mass violence against Muslims, now Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi provides ideological cover with "his message of Cleanliness, Purity and Sacrifice for the nation," while his followers harass dissenters, censor unpopular ideas, and "formalize the process of turning history into mythology" (407).

Ministry, thus, exemplifies the critique done by the "return of realism." It explores "the 'shock' of combined unevenness," taking "the present social order as its object" and advancing a "historicist" epistemology that "peer[s] back into the [recent] past, by way of recovering both the specific history of the present and the alternative histories that might have been but were not, yet that (paradoxically) still might be" (WReC 2015: 72). It continues Roy's work as an activist who in the twenty years following the success of her first novel published exclusively nonfiction: the "realist impulse" par excellence (Anjaria 2016: 278). In *The God of Small Things* (1997) the contours of India's "alternative histories" lay somewhere between the unrealized potential of Naxalite revolution and the persecuted intimacy of inter-caste love. Scraps of hope could, Roy suggested, be found in the "rejected shell of garbage" of "an outmoded world-view" (1997: 320) – an idea she builds upon in *Ministry*. The latter novel sees its protagonist establish a community of the dispossessed in an abandoned cemetery. This group of misfits includes members of Delhi's preeminent Hijrah (transgender) association, a Dalit convert to Islam defiantly called Saddam Hussein, two Kashmir militants, a hunger-striking local celebrity, and a baby – abandoned by her Naxalite mother, named for the victim of a police killing, and an ambiguously messianic figure. These are the "surplus people" rendered obsolete by development, a community of human garbage united by the anachronistic belief they have immanent value. The novel's community is fragile, but its survival in the forgotten spaces of metropolitan renewal gestures to possibilities not yet foreclosed by neoliberal authoritarianism. As long as they persist, there remains hope that "things would turn out all right in the end" (444).

As this example shows, the novels emerging from the "return of realism" attest to the failure of the world-system to colonize every crevice of the extant globe, either materially or imaginatively. Roy's work exemplifies how the cyclical production of unevenness generates immanent frontiers (see Harvey 1982: 416–17), targets for imposed normalization that are *also* sites where progressivism sputters. The tendency of the world realist novel to focus on trauma and the entrenchment of inequity is therefore not only, or simply, a kind of global pessimism, reflecting a pervasive anxiety that little but catastrophe lies in our future. There is a basic hopefulness encoded in the belief that the realist novel, a genre predicated on extended temporalities of production and consumption, might introduce contemplation into a global public sphere otherwise characterized by haste, prejudice, and the grotesque deceits of "alternative facts." The ethical-epistemological-aesthetic constellation affirms the novel's capacity to imaginatively map the contours

of our shared but particularized predicament, "writ[ing] the ever-unfolding contemporary reality of the global South into the global novel" (Anjaria 2016: 283). It thereby establishes the genre as intrinsic to democratic ideals of public reason. As such, the "return of realism" marks the connection between world literature and a functioning civil society, two elements of Roy's "outmoded" humanism that are more essential now than ever.

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34

The Graphic Novel as an Intermedial Form

JAN BAETENS AND HUGO FREY

From Comics to Graphic Novels

In the world of comics as a popular form of world literature, the graphic novel has progressively emerged as a concept in the 1980s and it has immediately proven to be a game-changer. Comics are not a recent medium. A form of visual narrative made immensely popular through its circulation in magazines and newspapers since the late nineteenth century, but often with rich and complex prehistories, comics are a field that for many years had been divided into three main areas: the American market and its killer application, the superhero *comic book*; the European-continental market, whose leading publication channel was the *bande dessinée* album (A4 format, forty-eight pages, full color), and the Japanese *manga* market, characterized by a wide range of styles, themes, and genres catering to the needs of highly specific user groups. Intercultural circulation between these three types was both systematic and difficult. Certain forms of national, that is American, European, or Japanese comics managed to cross cultural divides, mainly thanks to their integration in multimedia conglomerates. For instance, Disney comics have prospered in Europe thanks to the success of the Mickey Mouse cartoons, just as the *anime* and video game business accelerated the global triumph of manga. In many other ways, however, the barriers remain: the European public has always remained skeptical of superhero comics, US readers have proven reluctant readers of *bande dessinée* heroes and adventures (even Spielberg has not succeeded in making *Tintin* a popular read, not even for a juvenile readership), while manga fans all over the world have a tendency to read only manga, ignoring or discarding other types of comics. Moreover, it should not come as a surprise that the hegemonic position of the three major markets has long prevented them from seeing the existence of other forms of comics, different from the local appropriations

of one or more of the three dominant models, in other parts of the world (Aldama 2017).

Contrary to the traditional world of comics, not only is the world of the graphic novel different, it also functions differently. Roughly speaking, the graphic novel as we know it today is characterized by a wide range of features that help foreground the divide between comics in general and graphic novels in particular (Baetens and Frey 2015; Baetens, Frey, and Tabachnick, 2018). First of all, graphic novels are no longer published in one of their traditional formats such as comic books, *bande dessinée* albums, manga pocket books, but in formats that are close to that of a novel. This change is not merely technical; it also involves a radical shift in the distribution system of these works, which are no longer sold in newsstands or on subscription, but in real bookshops, with all that such a change implies in terms of cultural prestige, readership, and sustainability.

Second, graphic novels claim to address serious themes, targeting an adult audience, contrary to the junior or more undifferentiated audience targeted by the humor and adventure strips that constituted the bulk of the traditional comics production.

Third, a graphic novel is also marketed as the product of a single author, who does both the storytelling and the artwork, including the smaller tasks of lettering and coloring. Once again, this transformation is not merely a technical one. What matters here is not only the rejection of the traditional studio system and its sharp hierarchy and division of labor, but also the possibility to tell one's own story in one's own style. Hence the close relationship between graphic novel and autobiography, on the one hand, and graphic novel and unconventional yet immediately recognizable personal drawing styles, on the other hand.

Fourth, graphic novels tend also to be one-shots, contrary to the serial distribution of comics, which are first launched as pilots and then, provided the pilot proves commercially viable, elaborated into long-running series. Graphic novels are seen as unique projects made by authors who permanently try to reinvent themselves by imagining new forms and new universes.

Finally, and this is both a supplementary feature as well as the summary of all the other changes, the graphic novel is now definitely perceived as a form of literature, that is of storytelling, and not as a form of visual art, as could have become the case if the encounter between comics and art, a typical feature of 1960s pop art, had produced more sustainable effects (Beaty 2012; Frey and Baetens 2019). The explicitly literary frame of the graphic novel explains, for instance, the ease with which all recent histories of the genre

annex the tradition of the wordless books, such as the mute book-length woodcut stories by Frans Masereel, Lynd Ward, or Milt Gross (Beronå 2008). Without the generic and institutional frame of the graphic novel, these works would definitely be part of the world of illustration, poster art, cartooning, fine printmaking, etc. Thanks to this frame, however, they are now all reprinted and read again as graphic literature, as part of a larger movement in favor of the intermedialization of literature, a movement that actually started through the merger of literature and cinema in the field of storytelling (Collins 2010). In the world of literature, the notion of intermediality primarily refers to the increasing presence of visual elements such as drawings, figures, and photographs in the text, which thus ceases to be an exclusively verbal medium. The shift from print to screen has reinforced and accelerated this tendency.

The Graphic Novel as a Contested Category

The sharp divide between comics and graphic novel does not go without debate. Many graphic novels do not exemplify the whole range of features as described above. Serialization, for instance, is an essential part of the work of Chris Ware, currently considered the most innovative and artistically ambitious author of the graphic novel scene. Some graphic novelists do not publish book-length stories but specialize in short stories or mini-comics. Some of the modern pioneers of the graphic novel have authored novels that are actually short story collections, such as Harvey Kurtzman's 1959 *Harvey Kurtzman's Jungle Book* or Will Eisner's 1978 *A Contract With God*. Not all graphic novelists combine the two tasks of storytelling and drawing. Famous graphic novelists such as Harvey Pekar and Alan Moore wrote stories that were illustrated by other artists; others like Oscar Zárate are not the scriptwriter of their own work; still other authors such as Benoît Peeters and François Schuiten collaborate so closely together that it is no longer possible to distinguish between their specific input. Several continue to adopt the classic publication formats, such as, for instance, Daniel Clowes or Seth, who develop their own comic book series alongside their book production. On the other hand, a large number of works that are still labeled as comic books, *bandes dessinées*, or manga are in many respects as good examples of the graphic novel formula as any other official representative of the genre, as demonstrated by the large number of comics cycles or serials repackaged or repositioned as graphic novels at the moment of their editing into single-volume books. The most famous case being, of course, Moore and Gibbons's

Watchmen, first issued as a twelve-volume comic book series (1986) but almost immediately relabeled as one of the starting points of the graphic novel (book publication in 1987).

It is therefore necessary to fine-tune the definition of the graphic novel, highlighting the importance of context-based features. The most important of them is, of course, the American origin of the term: in the United States, the long-standing hegemony of superheroes comics made it very easy to introduce a sharp distinction between comics, silly kid's stuff, and graphic novels, serious material for adult readers. In the European context, for instance, where the *bande dessinée* tradition had never been monopolized either by a single genre or by a single target audience, such a distinction is much more difficult to establish, hence the resistance to the label, often accused of being a form of Yankee cultural imperialism (we will see, however, that in the United States there have been many critical voices as well). A second dimension of the discussion refers to the temporal scope of the term. It does not make much sense to try to identify or localize the "first" graphic novel, for one can always find other examples. What is meaningful instead is the observation that the term graphic novel itself is increasingly used in the 1980s, and that the very presence of the label in the cultural field has strong performative effects. The introduction of the new term does not only accelerate the debate on the forms and functions of a cultural practice that used to be systematically discarded or overlooked, it also encourages and enables the production of new works that explicitly attempts to create new forms of comics that can no longer be mingled with traditional comics. Finally, it would be a mistake to underestimate the commercial aspects of the graphic novel label, which has been intensely used as a promotional tool – not just for the graphic novel itself, but also for a number of institutions that are suffering from an old-fashioned image, ranging from the bookshop to college education. A large majority of graphic novelists are well-known protectors of print culture who resist the move to digitize cultural content (Chute and Jagoda 2014). Studying graphic novels is seen as a defense strategy against shrinking enrollment figures in language and literature departments, a worldwide phenomenon, by the way.

As already mentioned, the resistance to the graphic novel as a separate and culturally more valuable category of comics is a long-standing issue in the United States as well, despite the country being the culture of origin and later the main laboratory of the genre. Authors and critics such as Art Spiegelman (2007) or Charles Hatfield (2005) have repeatedly emphasized what is lost with the symbolically upwardly mobile move from comics to graphic novels,

in cultural as well as economic terms. Culturally speaking, the shift from low to high – to put things in a very simplified way – generates a break with the creative chaos of popular culture as well as the possibility to rapidly respond to and comment on contemporary events. Economically speaking, it jeopardizes both the DIY culture that made underground *comix* possible and the modest yet undeniable economic profit generated by serial publication (which may help pre-finance the inevitably slow and time-consuming making of a book, for instance). As convincingly demonstrated by Christopher Pizzino (2016), the clash between these two approaches, each of them as militant as the other, is not limited to authorial statements and critical discussions. It also imbues and structures the works of many artists, who thematize this struggle in various ways. The love of comics as a popular, if not frankly vulgar and anarchic, medium versus the attempt to upgrade the previously popular and commercially stained medium and to reframe it as a new form of high art is a hotly debated issue that helps circumvent an oversimplified approach to the complex relationship between comics and graphic novels.

A Short History of the Graphic Novel

The emergence and institutionalization of the graphic novel can be described in four steps.

The first step coincides with the timid attempts to launch the concept in the late 1970s, alongside, and in the slipstream of, Eisner's *A Contract with God*. These efforts, which did not always mention older uses of the term, were quite unsuccessful, and it is mainly in retrospect, after the victorious implantation of the graphic novel label, that the importance of this book can be acknowledged. In these years, Eisner was more appreciated for his work in the comics industry, via his character "The Spirit" (1940–52), and for one of the first theoretically founded handbooks on comics making, *Comics and Sequential Art* (Eisner 1985), a forerunner of the book that some years later helped relaunch the critical discourse on the medium, Scott McCloud's international best-seller *Understanding Comics* (1991).

A second step coincides with the metamorphosis of previous forms of less mainstream or downright avant-garde comics that were repositioned as graphic novels, either by the authors and their publishers or by other players in the field (critics, juries, libraries, booksellers). The year 1987 appears as a watershed moment for the reconfiguration of alternative comic books, with the simultaneous publication of the already mentioned *Watchmen* as well as

a new Batman interpretation, Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns*, two outstanding examples of the less conventional output the DC comics company had been experimenting with in the previous years. Together with Spiegelman's *Maus*, a post-comix (post-underground comics) memoir serialized from 1980 until 1991, and published in two volumes, the first one in 1986, the second one in 1991, these books succeeded in turning the graphic novel label into a fashionable and commercially viable genre label (although it was used for *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight Returns* only).

The third step, and the real turning point in the institutional history of the graphic novel, was without any doubt the Pulitzer prize given to *Maus* in 1992, in the category "Special Awards and Citations." Not only did the award give immense prestige to the author and his work, it also started a heated debate on the generic status of *Maus*, fiction or nonfiction, which the Pulitzer prize did not specify, and which "contaminated" the discussion on other generic aspects of the work. For Spiegelman *Maus* was a comic, but for many readers it was a graphic novel. The impact of this debate would have been just a small and forgotten ripple in the publishing ocean were the book not such a brilliant masterpiece.

Fourth, the final and logical last step of this process of increasing visibility and consolidation of the graphic novel form is its integration in the powerhouses of mainstream publishing. This is what happened in the Anglo-Saxon world, where Pantheon (a Penguin-Random House company) opened a graphic novel line with *Maus*, and has been specializing since the 1990s in the canonization or "pantheonization" of contemporary graphic novelists, such as Chris Ware, Marjane Satrapi, Daniel Clowes, or Charles Burns, as well as in the recuperation and thus symbolic upgrading of authors clearly belonging to pre-graphic novel forms and periods of comics, such as Charles Schulz (*Peanuts*) or Alex Ross (a DC superheroes creator). Pantheon's policy, strongly marked by the creative covers of designer Chip Kidd, is a blatant testimony of the shifting power balance between comics and graphic novels: if once graphic novels were no more than a by-product of the comics universe, it is now the graphic novel that decides which comics are given status and value. The tagline of the Pantheon Graphic Novels catalog is: "Found in Graphic Novels & Manga." To a certain extent, the situation in France, the *bande dessinée* market leader, is comparable, at least for what concerns the canonization phase of the process. Here as well, we notice that the major literary publishers, Gallimard, Le Seuil, and Actes Sud, launch their own graphic novel series, which often take over works and authors discovered by smaller specialist publishers.

The institutionalization of the graphic novel does not mean that the medium reflects the growing importance of world literature in a way that exceeds the relative globalization of the broader field of comics. After all, the participation of comics in world literature is only partial. True, comics are a worldwide phenomenon, with both national and international markets; but the vigor and popularity of many regional or national works, characters, and series, which generally survive in spite of the overwhelming presence of multimedia-supported comics, is a distinctive feature of the business. Comics as a form may become more universal, as seen in the increasing success of manga as a kind of modern visual *koine*. But the content of most works and series remains deeply context-rooted, certainly in the case of humoristic series. As is well known, few symbolic aspects of a comic are as culture-sensitive as its humor. Yet in the case of the graphic novel, things seem different, and there are good reasons why a global graphic novel scene exists today.

Globalization of the Graphic Novel

A first element that is crucial in this globalization is the fact that the graphic novel is inextricably linked with the notion of individual and unique authorship (even if, in practice, this authorial function can be shared by several persons). This *auteur* philosophy of the medium signifies that there is room for personal themes and personal styles that could not be accepted in the traditional mainstream, studio-based production lines. In principle, this radical individualization of subject matter and drawing style should prevent the graphic novel from becoming a global and universal medium. In practice however, the results of this refashioning of the genre, each author having now the freedom to do whatever she or he prefers, go in the opposite direction, that of the rapidly growing unification of the field. Indeed, as far as subject matter is concerned, one easily observes that the theoretically unlimited range of possible themes and topics is narrowed down to two specific fields: autobiography, on the one hand, nonfiction (often biographies) and graphic journalism, on the other. Moreover, in both cases, the authors almost automatically focus on the most widely shared aspects of these themes: autobiography is often reduced to the experiences of personal trauma, coming of age, sexual and family violence, illness, disability, mourning, etc., which are straightforwardly identified and acknowledged by the generally well-to-do readerships of the graphic novel. Contrary to comic books, *bandes dessinées*, and manga, graphic novels are often lavishly printed,

hard-bound volumes that cannot be afforded by the traditional comics readers – a crude sociological observation that brings grist to the mill of all those who accuse the genre of being an elite perversion of cheap classic comics culture. As far as the other thematic side of the graphic novel is concerned, nonfiction and graphic journalism, one should notice that the genre often focuses on issues that are also at the heart of the globalized media information system: the Shoah, Palestine, World War I, for instance, are well represented, to put it mildly, and the direct connection between what can be read in a graphic novel and what features in the 24-hour news cycle on global networks is not a mere detail when it comes to understanding the virtual integration of the medium into a "universal" global culture. Whatever the interpretation of this thematic curbing, it surely contributes to a thorough unification of the genre. The extreme stylistic volatility of the graphic novel, which seems to contradict the reduction of its subject matter, has paradoxically enough comparable consequences. Not because the "anything goes" take on drawing styles tends to engender a kind of implicit universalism, but because the impossibility to recognize national styles helps transcend what used to limit global circulation of comics, namely the lasting boundaries between comic book style, *bande dessinée* style, and manga style, which all had their fans, but often their exclusive fans. In the case of the graphic novel, it is no longer always possible to establish a link between the individual style of an author and the national or transnational tradition she or he could be part of. American authors can use a post-Clear Line style typical of many European *bandes dessinées* (non-specialists will not immediately see the difference between a Chris Ware drawing and a Joost Swarte drawing, for instance), Japanese authors have found their inspiration in French albums and vice versa (the examples of Jirô Taniguchi and Frédéric Boilet spring here to mind), while UK authors such as Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, or Grant Morrison ("the British Invasion" wave of the early 1980s) were paramount in the reinvention of American superhero comics.

A second element that has paved the way for the globalization of the graphic novel is the combination of an economic and a linguistic feature: on the one hand, the dominant position of English as our current lingua franca, which favors the penetration of the US production – the first one to be officially labeled as "graphic novel" – in non-anglophone areas; on the other hand, the extension and enhancement of the book distribution channels used, if not partially controlled, by the major publishing houses that have welcomed the emerging graphic novel. Both phenomena reinforce each other and make possible the circulation as well as the actual reception of the

graphic novel production in English, even before other major language or local translations are available. Since everybody's works, published by Pantheon and other major players, are nowadays easily available in many places in the world, it has become much easier to access the material first-hand, provided one puts aside the abovementioned financial threshold. In addition, the widespread idea (or illusion?) that the graphic novel is easier to read than a "real" novel pushes many young or early readers to this type of work, less frightening to start reading than, for instance, Henry James or Djuna Barnes. The increasing number of translations is another decisive aspect of the shift from the "comics mosaic," with several interacting yet still definitely autonomous linguistic and cultural traditions, to the "graphic novel corpus," where more and more *bandes dessinées* and manga are now being read in translation, that is in English – and therefore tightly interwoven with anglophone production. For example, not all readers of Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* will realize that this work is actually a translation from the French. Finally, it is important to stress as well that more and more original works and their translations are issued simultaneously, which for the anglophone reader, native or not, diminishes the awareness of other traditions "out there." Similar attempts to bring together manga and *bande dessinée* have proven less successful, mainly due to persistent linguistic barriers, notwithstanding some valuable experiments with bilingual publishing.

A third major difference between the older world of comics and the newer world of the graphic novel is the rapid creation of a universal canon, as established by critics and promptly implemented by teachers and theoreticians. True, this canon does not necessarily mirror actual reading preferences of real readers – a problem frequently addressed by scholars comparing the choices of professional and culturally empowered readers and those of ordinary readers (in the field of comics, this issue has been astutely studied by Beaty and Woo [2016]). But what should not go unnoticed is the extreme rapidity of the making of this canon, which proves incredibly simple and apparently global. It is the golden trio of Spiegelman's *Maus*, Satrapi's *Persepolis*, and Bechdel's *Fun Home*. The less recent production *Watchmen* has somewhat fallen out of grace, just as with Miller's work, while none of the authors who gained visibility since the 1990s, such as Chris Ware, Daniel Clowes, and Charles Burns, may ever find the same broad readership as Spiegelman, Satrapi, and Bechdel. The last three are also read by non-graphic novel readers, while the merits and qualities of Ware, Clowes, and Burns are less expected to exceed the circles of comics and graphic novels aficionados. This amazing reduction of the canon and the strong institutional framing of

these authors has a tremendous impact on the constitution of a global medium, which is not just the automatic result of a unified distribution and retail system, but also the self-fulfilling consequence of a dramatically streamlined advisory policy at educational level. Graphic novel reading lists are nowadays more or less the same all over the world, at least in those parts of the world where the genre is taught.

Intensification of intertextual bridges between works from different national and linguistic domains is a fourth element that is the cause as well as the consequence of increased globalization. In this regard, and we will come back to this point in our conclusion, it is imperative to emphasize that these mutual influences are not a one-way traffic, with only the US production leaving marks in that of other or minor cultures. The most obvious example of the truly transnational spirit and aesthetics of the graphic novel can probably be found in the avant-garde magazine *RAW*, a comics anthology edited by Art Spiegelman and his (French) wife, Françoise Mouly, between 1980 and 1991, the year when *Maus 2* was published and the graphic novel was surrounded by cultural hype. *RAW* published eleven issues and the magazine has been key in preparing the transition from underground comix to alternative comics and eventually the graphic novel movement, in spite of Spiegelman's problems with the label. Contrary to other post-comix or avant-garde magazines, such as Crumb's *Weirdo*, definitely a continuation of the underground – and *Heavy Metal*, initially a simple translation of the French *Métal Hurlant,* but very rapidly a genre (science fiction, fantasy, horror) oriented publication – the editorial policy of *RAW* aimed at presenting the best of the international avant-garde production in the comics for adults field (the term "adult comics" often refers to porn or soft porn comics, which is not the case with "comics for adults"). It published work by all major European and American comics artists of the eighties and nineties, such as Jacques Tardi, Joost Swarte, or Ever Meulen. Works by authors from Argentina (Muñoz and Sampayo), Congo (Chéri Samba), or Japan as well as works by authors from older periods (McCay, Herriman, Doré) could be admired in this upscale magazine, whose modest copy run did not prevent it from radically transforming the public perception of the medium.

The internationalization of the table of contents of graphic novel anthologies – a staple publication form in the field – or the seamless juxtaposition of national and international authors in the catalogues and back lists of all major publishers hint at the great naturalness of the globalization of the graphic novel. This is also reflected in the international mobility of many artists. Thus, Robert Crumb has been living in France for many decades, where he has been recognized very

rapidly as a real artist and not just as an important comics author or graphic novelist. Joe Sacco, currently the major voice in the field of graphic journalism, is Maltese-born. Before moving to Los Angeles, he spent his childhood and youth in Melbourne, Australia. After several long and short stays in Tokyo, French graphic novelist Frédéric Boilet has lived in Japan for twelve years, a period in which he started working directly for the Japanese market. No less important than these editorial and biographical transfers and exchanges is the fact that the transnational character of the graphic novel is directly echoed in the themes and styles of many of these works.

A good example of this cultural cross-pollination is Charles Burns's *Toxic* Trilogy (2010–14). In this ultimately postmodern triptych, Burns not only includes an impressive number of allusions and references to the *Adventures of Tintin*, but also cleverly appropriates Hergé's typical Clear Line style in order to bend it toward his own, very personal, post-apocalyptic universe. True, *Tintin* is not the only point of reference: next to *Tintin*, one should mention also the world of romance comics, the punk music scene, and the writing of William S. Burroughs. But this clearly underlines the difference between comics, where US artists would never rely on this kind of intertextual layering based on an in-depth knowledge of European works, and the graphic novel, where many authors effortlessly manage to bring together old and new models, comics and graphic novels, as well as national and international motifs and styles. Besides, in the case of Burns's *Toxic*, the multiple Hergé references are not the sign of the personal interest of the author in the work of one of his great predecessors, or the result of a somewhat opportunistic attempt to cash in on Spielberg's 2011 adaptation *The Adventures of Tintin*. Let us recall, however, that this film did not target the graphic novel readership and that Burns cautiously avoids reworking the Tintin album that was the basis of Spielberg's movie *The Secret of the Unicorn*. Burns's works reveal instead a careful reading of Hergé's works themselves, more particularly of their own transnational intertextuality. Burns uses, for instance, *The Black Island* adventure, strongly marked by John Buchan's *The 39 Steps* and King Kong. In other words, what Burns is doing by globalizing his own books also comes down to a retro-globalization, if we may say, of a comics storyworld that Burns's national readership may consider "narrowly European," if not to say Eurocentric and characterized by old-fashioned exoticism.

Unity and Diversity of the Graphic Novel

Contrary to the globalization of comics, more specifically of superhero comics, the globalization of the graphic novel field does not depend very

much on its integration in the production and publication policy of large media conglomerates, where intermedial adaptations from book to film (Murray 2011) as well as transmedia storytelling (Jenkins 2006) have become the norm. The economic size of the graphic novel is generally too small to be of any interest for this kind of mega-cultural industry, and many authors actively resist adaptations. Some notable exceptions are Daniel Clowes, whose work has been diversely – and generally rather well – adapted to the screen (see Terry Zwigoff's 2001 adaptation of *Ghost World*) or Harvey Pekar (see Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini's 2003 adaptation of the long-running *American Splendor* series). Yet these films are art house productions, not blockbusters, and they are as much original *auteur* movies as economic tie-ins of the original graphic novels. As noted above, the globalization of the graphic novel owes much more to efficient distribution structures and the disappearance of linguistic thresholds, everybody finding as well as being capable of reading books in English today, if not starting to write in English himself or herself as frequently done today by native speakers of smaller languages, than to the ubiquity of the products of internationally structured multimedia conglomerates.

This may explain another rather curious lack in the world of the graphic novel: the relative absence of mute or wordless graphic novels, although the worldwide success of Shaun Tan's 2006 *The Arrival* should prevent us from making too rapid a generalization. In principle, one could have expected a convergence between globalization and wordlessness – all the more since one of the predecessors of the modern graphic novel was precisely the wordless woodcut novel. The reduction of text in speech and thought balloons as well as in captions, if not the preference for completely wordless graphic novels, could have been a logical decision for all those – authors as well as publishers – to underline the transnational potential as well as ambitions of the genre. Yet this is definitely not what happens. Graphic novels are only rarely wordless, and it is not their texts but their images that may prove problematic at the level of intercultural communication: if many readers all over the world understand English today and therefore think they understand the graphic novel's text, the same cannot be said of the perception and understanding of visual elements, whose multiple layers are not automatically decoded by culturally (nationally) uneducated viewers. Here as well, the *Toxic* example of Charles Burns, which evidently aims at making things strange and at making us doubt what we actually see, illustrates the problematic nature of the image, but also the aesthetic and ideological ambition of the graphic novel, which never takes its own images

for granted and which is perfectly aware of the misunderstandings and misreadings generated by the worldwide circulation of our images, be they totally unknown or dramatically iconic.

As an inevitable conclusion of any contemporary discussion on global or world culture, one, perhaps, needs to reflect on whether the transnational turn one observes in the shift from comics to graphic novel is just the expression of the international hegemony of one or more national paradigms or the result of the increased complexity and multiple internal differences within the field itself. To a certain extent, one might say that in comparison with the comics field, the graphic novel is more streamlined and less diverse. It is definitely US oriented as it is deeply rooted in the English language and the Anglo-Saxon cultural distribution networks. Nevertheless, it would be unfair to stress once again too stereotyped a view of the American empire. In practice, the graphic novel is a field that is extremely open to difference and to critical voices, as many of our examples have already suggested. Among the three key works of the current canon, none of them affirms or corroborates mainstream culture. *Maus* is a work that has dramatically challenged traditional ways of thinking about the Shoah and trauma culture in general. Its cultural significance is as great as that of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*. *Persepolis* is the work of an Iranian woman author whose views of the Islamic revolution are no less critical than that of her newly found exile culture. Satrapi is a great role model for many debates on postcolonial or non-Western "writing back" that extend well beyond a simple inversion between "us" and "them." *Fun Home*, also written by a woman, has almost immediately become a key work for feminist, queer, and LGBT culture. Bechdel's work shows the political significance and impact of finding one's voice in direct dialogue with mainstream forms and formats.[1]

However, the diversity of the canon should not conceal the many gaps that still exist in today's conceptualization of the graphic novel, which is still strongly marked by the continuation of the main models and markets inherited from the comics universe: superhero comic books, *bandes dessinées*, manga. One can only hope that the growing visibility of other traditions, such as the contemporary Indian graphic novel, will translate very soon into the broadening of the canon, not only in terms of authors but also in terms of themes and styles (Dawson Varughese 2017). The continuation and strengthening of the transnational editorial policy of initiatives such as *RAW*, today no longer in magazine format (an outdated publication model

1 See Chute 2008 on the role of women in the graphic novel.

since the 1990s) but in anthology or collective publication format, will certainly prove conducive to further globalization of the field. A good example of this work is the transatlantic collaboration between American and European authors in the Oulipo framework, the France-based but rapidly internationalizing "workshop for potential literature" which aims at producing constraint-based writing in all languages and media, including comics and graphic novels. Matt Madden's *99 Ways to Tell a Story* (2005), a visual reinterpretation of Raymond Queneau's *Exercises in Style* (1947), is a good illustration of this transnational circulation of ideas and forms. Constraints are not trademarked and can be freely reused by all those who try to push the boundaries of stories and techniques. Yet chief in the larger process of globalization remains education, more precisely the implementation of a world perspective in educational tools such as anthologies, readers, textbooks, handbooks, undergraduate and graduate classes, scholarly journals, or UP series, as well as curatorial resources and initiatives such as shows, catalogs, or archives. The globalization of the graphic novel is increasingly important in the field of world literature, but there is no harm in helping it grow in ways that foster the richness and diversity of its journey beyond boundaries that are not those of the medium itself.

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35
World Children's Literature

MELEK ORTABASI

What is world children's literature? This chapter explains it as a modern and transnational genre that came into being in the late nineteenth century. That we can now regard children's literature as a cross-cultural genre characterized by widely shared notions of appropriate content or intended readership is a result of a complex, entangled set of historical and political circumstances. These include the growth of childhood as a scientific and cultural concept; the importance of this newly defined childhood to modern nation-building efforts, especially as manifested in the centralization of schooling; the rise of mass media, including that tailored to children; and finally, the gradual creation of a literate child and youth population that developed its own reading cultures. Specific aspects of how this historical moment evolved are explored in more detail using German, Japanese, and Anglo-American cases as examples. I'd like to begin by highlighting two developments. First, the transnational pedagogical debate about children's literature in the school curriculum at the end of the nineteenth century demonstrates how this genre assumed a central role in creating future citizens and imagined communities. Then, an exploration of the international boom in more popular, entertainment-oriented children's literature around the fin de siècle shows how the ideological goals of adults shaped – and were shaped by – children's imagination of the world. Since this formative period, world children's literature has continued to grow as a complex, uneven system of international exchange powered by a distinctive and paradoxical mix of didacticism and idealism on the one hand, and generosity and adaptability on the other.

The Worlding of Children's Literature

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.
—William Wordsworth, "My Heart Leaps Up"

The nostalgic sentimentalism of William Wordsworth's famous 1802 poem is emblematic not only of European Romantic thought, but also of modern conceptions of childhood. The memorable image of a small child charmed by the appearance of a rainbow in the sky paints a pastoral view, first aligning the child with the perceived innocence and beauty of the natural world. Then, through repeated use of the emphatic "So," the speaker centers the sense of wonder he associates with childhood, emphasizing this crucial characteristic of the childlike as indispensable to adult identity. So important to one's humanity is the wisdom innate to children, the speaker seems to suggest, that adulthood is but a secondary development, of worth only if the fullness of the child mind is effectively preserved throughout life. Wordsworth's influential poem gave voice to a Romantic concept of childhood that was beginning to emerge from a growing interdisciplinary discourse on the topic. This discourse on the child, which continued to gain momentum internationally over the course of the nineteenth century, also spurred the rise of a transnational body of children's literature.

It was not the idealism of literary Romantics alone, though, that sparked the international boom in writing for children during the latter part of the century. The increased production and dissemination of children's literature was also driven by a more pragmatic interest in the child that resulted from the identification of youth as a vital resource for the nation's future. Nations both old and new experienced a fin de siècle boost in the recognition of children as a national interest that demanded governmental attention. Motivated by urgent national and international concerns, well-established democracies, as well as newly formed nations like Germany, Italy, and Japan, began to exert control over a number of areas of child life, notably welfare and education. In a 1910 speech given in Kiev, Russian advocate of kindergarten education N. D. Lubenets expressed the *zeitgeist* when she proudly proclaimed: "Children and schoolchildren are attracting more and more attention on the part of society, the state, and the nation at large. A kind of cult of childhood has come into existence; it is the glory and the distinguishing characteristic of the age" (quoted in Kelly 2007: 25). Political and intellectual elites, in

communication with their international counterparts, were quick to grasp that effective nation-building relied upon the idea that children of all socioeconomic classes were impressionable beings – though not necessarily innately wise – who could be molded, through education, into patriotic and productive citizens.

It is no coincidence, then, that during the latter half of the nineteenth century "the child became the focus of unprecedented observation, analysis, and speculation, culminating in the final decade in the foundation of a child study movement which brought together psychologists, educators, writers, and parents" (Shuttleworth 2010: 4). This cosmopolitan, transnational network produced scientific knowledge about how a child's emerging sense of self was formed through imaginative play and developing use of language, evidence which, in turn, began to radically change attitudes toward children's literature as well (5). While participating in the transnational debate that the child study movement had created, writers and educators around the globe now struggled in diverse ways to reconcile this new information with the more traditional educational goals that had governed debates about childhood reading. A teacher in John Dewey's progressive experimental school in Chicago, echoing some of her counterparts in other countries, notes in 1900 that one must be careful in offering literary selections to children: "[j]ust because this is a period of fantasy and imagination is no reason for exciting the child's imagination; it should rather be cultivated and given the appropriate modes of expression necessary to clarify it" (Dewey 1900: 139).[1] Some writers, by contrast, began to look to literature as a refuge from the pedagogical that would allow the free play of the imagination, now deemed to be important to child development. Japanese writers of the 1920s *dôshinshugi* (literally, "child's heart"-ism) movement, for example, shared with many international peers the desire to write in a way that "recognize[d] the humanity of the child and the uniqueness of a child's heart, and encourage[d] free and creative growth" (Kan Tadamichi, quoted in Keith 2011: 46).

A literature that addressed these scientifically acknowledged aspects of child development marked a change from previous reading material given to children, which had not really ascribed to young readers a qualitatively different subjectivity from adults. Until the late eighteenth century, literate children of the elite in most places – whether in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, or the Americas – generally learned to read texts that were not

1 Progressive and influential educational reformer John Dewey (1859–1952) ran his "Laboratory School" at the University of Chicago from 1896–1904.

strongly differentiated from those for their parents, if at all.[2] When books were specifically directed toward the child reader, they were defined primarily by the adult-approved content they were to impart rather than the accessibility of their style or form to children. In fact, the labels now commonly used in bookstores and libraries around the world to classify materials for the young are generally less than 150 years old. The Royal Library of Copenhagen, for example, shows the particular history of the genre in Denmark as viewed through cataloguing practices:

> Until 1830 . . . all entries for children's books are found under the section headed "moraliserende, udviklende og underholdene litteratur": (moralizing, developmental or educational and entertaining literature); from 1831 until 1892 entries are found under the more unambivalent "paedagogik" (education). From 1892 until the end of the century entries are under the heading "uddanelse og opdragelse" (education and upbringing). It is not until well into the twentieth century that the section dealing with children's literature is actually designated "børnebøger" (children's books).
>
> (Shine 1978: 120)

The evolving tensions between education and entertainment visible here mirror the European context more generally, where the market for children's books was directed at a small, elite audience that favored instructive books over enjoyable ones.[3] A heavy bias toward the didactic also held in premodern Asia, host to the longest history of print culture in the world, where, with some exceptions, entertaining texts written and published specifically for children were scarce prior to the 1800s.[4] In contrast, writers of children's books in the nineteenth century began to become more aware of their young readership, while reframing the educative purpose of such books to fit the (inter)national demands of the age.

The "internationalism-based-on-nationalism" that defined the cross-cultural exchange of ideas and texts related to children's education at the extended turn of the century is what served to establish children's literature, in many countries, as a nationally important genre with deeply transnational

2 The extensive premodern cultures surrounding children's study of sacred texts, whether the Torah, Bible, or the Qurʾān, are prime examples of this. "Literature" is understood here as print culture.

3 Björn Sundmark matter-of-factly states this tendency in his discussion about Germany and the Scandinavian countries in particular (2011: 122).

4 In China, "[i]t could be said that the prehistory of modern Chinese children's literature had two branches: material, primarily educational, that was written for children with meticulous care, and material that children enjoyed, but that was not meant specifically for them" (Farquhar 1999: 18).

roots (Cave 2016: 3). At the same time, the emerging discursive space occupied by world children's literature, in which geographically and culturally disparate literary traditions participated, was defined by "relational configurations that [we]re active and asymmetrical" (Werner and Zimmermann 2006: 38). With an eye to the "inter-crossings" that shaped the differential development of children's literature across and within borders, the rest of this chapter will explore some specific manifestations of world children's literature that were shared across local settings. In cultures as diverse as the German, Anglo-American, and Japanese, it is easy to observe a number of striking commonalities in the production, dissemination, and consumption of children's literature arising from the particular confluence of cultural, scientific, political, economic, and technological factors that characterized nation-building efforts in the nineteenth century. It is more difficult to trace the outlines of the distinctly transnational literary discourse that emerged from this set of "entangled histories."[5] In other words, world children's literature was less a specific literary genre than an emerging transnational discourse on the role of language and literature in the life of the child, to whom so many emotional, cultural, and political hopes and expectations had been newly attached.

Children's Literature Goes to School

Given the increasing importance of the child in the national imagination toward the end of the nineteenth century, it is unsurprising that children's literature became the site where education and (cultural) politics intersected and conflicted most intensely. In her groundbreaking 1900 book *Barnets århundrade* (translated into English in 1909 as *The Century of the Child*), Swedish educationist Ellen Key (1849–1926) posits a child-centered view of education in which reading literature is vital to a child's development: "Imagination must have nourishment outside of itself; otherwise it will live upon its own product. Its nourishment should be what is most readable. The child's mind should be first fed on legends and then on great literature" (1909: 268). Reflecting traditional views, she posits the child as an empty vessel, ready to be "fed" the appropriate materials by knowledgeable adults. However, by implying that inculcating a creative and well-informed sense of agency should be the main objective of child education, she recognizes the

5 The term "entangled histories" (*histoire croisée*) was coined by Werner and Zimmermann in their article "Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity" (2006).

existence and importance of a child's burgeoning subjectivity. Her confident invocation of "literature" as a preferred source for building this type of selfhood, however, was radical for the time. Although embraced by other progressive educators, this view remained in an uneasy relationship with government-sponsored pedagogical objectives.

Key's privileged bourgeois vision of children's reading was at odds with the reality of public schooling in the late nineteenth century – whether in Sweden or elsewhere. American educator John Dewey, in his influential book *The School and Society* (1899), seems to complain about colleagues like Key:

> While our educational leaders are talking of culture, the development of personality, etc., as the end and aim of education, the great majority of those who pass under the tuition of the school regard it only as a narrowly practical tool with which to get bread and butter enough to eke out a restricted life.
>
> (1915: 26)

Indeed, basic literacy and uneven school attendance rates were still major challenges in all industrializing nations and spurred a broad array of educational reforms designed to standardize and centralize schooling for a larger number of children than ever before.[6] In England, the Elementary Education Act of 1870 responded to the general dissatisfaction with the current state of schools – and moved to establish compulsory education.[7] King William I, as the head of a newly unified Germany, issued the 1872 Prussian School Law, which among other things decreed that management of all schools was now to be the responsibility of the state.[8] In Japan, just restored to imperial rule, the brand new Ministry of Education also moved quickly to establish a centralized public school system, proclaiming its intentions in the *Gakusei* (Education System Order) of 1872 (Duke 2009: 71). With the shift away from individualized learning for children that had prevailed in many private schools and wealthier homes, as well as the new inclusion of children who had little to no access to book learning in their families, schools scrambled to

6 For example, in the United States in 1870, 20 percent of all adults were illiterate and only about half of young white people aged five to nineteen were enrolled in school (Snyder 1993: 6, 9).

7 It was "the first of a number of acts of parliament passed between 1870 and 1893 to create compulsory education in England and Wales for children aged between five and 13" (British Library n.d.).

8 The legislation was reported on in the US government publication "Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1872" (1873: 469). The full German title of the legislation is "Allgemeine Bestimmungen über das Preussische Volksschul-, Präparanden- und Seminar-wesen vom 15. Oktober 1872."

create and provide curricula.[9] It is in these curricula, where educators struggled to address both national goals and children's interests, that we can, nevertheless, recognize the growing influence of voices like Ellen Key's.

Government policy, of course, did not defer to the diversity of child subjectivity: the prevailing goal was formulating an educational strategy designed to produce dutiful and productive citizens. At the same time, despite national and regional differences, schools faced the problematic of modern governance: "creating a society of self-regulating individuals who pursue the public good of their own volition" (Tröhler, Popkewitz, and Larabee 2011: xii–xiii). In other words, political elites harbored the paradoxical hope that treating children as passive, permissive objects would result in them becoming active, rational subjects as adults – and it was left to educators of the language arts to map out how children could be recognized as both objects *and* subjects in the classroom. Study of the national language, which became the most prominent feature of many school curricula in the late nineteenth century, emerged as the main conduit for constructing ideas of national identity in children's imaginations.[10] Teaching reading, one of the primary desiderata for the education of engaged citizens, was invested with particular importance. By the early twentieth century, the school reader, a literary teaching resource tailored to young children, emerged as the most popular tool for doing so.[11]

Readers, which anthologized literary and informational selections for children, also became a key genre for expressing the nation's political and cultural goals. Whether well-established, as in Prussia, where *Lesebücher* had

9 Educational historians show us the relatively recent origins for the many commonplaces of contemporary public education. In Japan, for example, "[o]ne of the rare pedagogical innovations from this period to gain rapid currency and truly be implemented in every classroom was the so-called 'simultaneous teaching method' (*issei kyōjuhō*), in which the teacher addressed the entire class rather than each student in turn" (Galan 2013). Catriona Kelly comments on children's access to books in prerevolutionary Russia, which mirrored the situation in many other countries: before they started school, peasant or working-class children "would probably not have encountered a special children's book (except, perhaps, for the textbook brought home by an older sibling), and parents would do little or nothing to direct their children's tastes" (2007: 450).

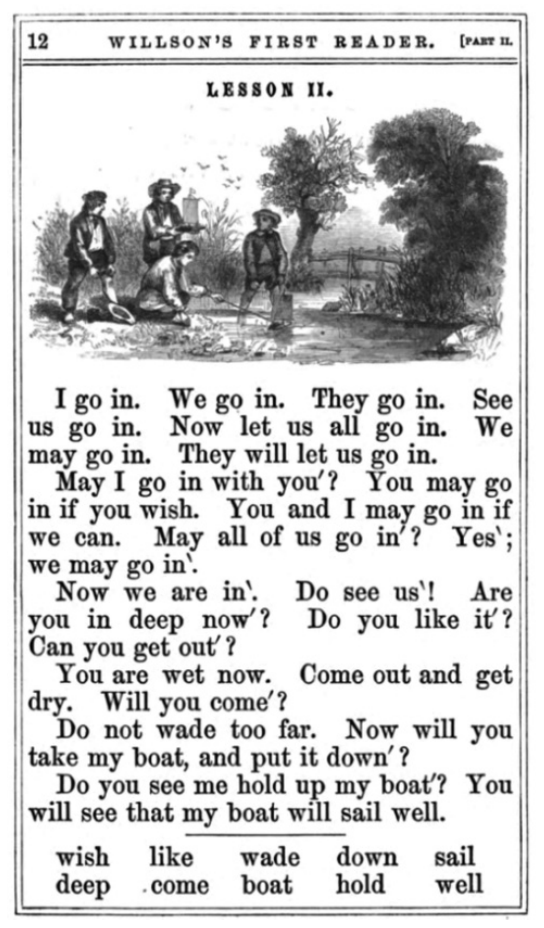
10 In Japanese elementary schools at the very beginning of the twentieth century, the hours devoted to Japanese language (*kokugo*) far outnumbered those given to any other subject (Tsurumi 1974: 248). The 1872 course of study for Prussian schools, meanwhile, shows "that the first years of school are devoted largely to German" (Alexander 1918: 248).

11 Around 1900 in the United States, for example, "Children's interests began to be recognized and researched, resulting in literary readers becoming more commonly used for basic reading instruction" (Burns 1976: 108).

been a thriving market since the early nineteenth century; in the United States, where the first readers to adapt themselves to different grade levels emerged during the same period; or in Japan, where the *tokuhon* was a modern, post-1868 Meiji Restoration innovation imported from the West, school readers were – for better or worse – also the single literary genre with the widest circulation.[12] Although the affordability of books remained a major challenge, school readers "were one of the few media to which [children] had regular access" – so it stands to reason that this assigned reading "had a very important role in shaping children's understandings of the world" (Cave 2016: 2). Transnationally accepted on the basis of this importance, readers were written and translated by professors, teachers, and educationists who were participants in an uneven but international network of exchange around pedagogical ideals.

The German-language examples of the genre are probably the most numerous and sophisticated in terms of their literary content. American observers of the Prussian schools just prior to the outbreak of World War I were impressed, for example, with the range of German poems and songs children learned by heart, noting children's extensive exposure to Johann Peter Hebel, Ludwig Uhland, Friedrich Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and the other canonical German authors who were staples of the typical *Lesebuch* (Alexander 1918: 330–31). Newer US school readers took their child-centered approach in a different direction that favored realism. A typical example of this preference was the widely used elementary school series by Marcius Willson (1813–1905), the *School and Family Readers* (1860; Figure 35.1). Featuring "regular" children with names like "John" and "Jane" in everyday situations, as well as high-quality illustrations for the time, the books earned praise from a contemporary journal editor for "enlarging the heart and cultivating the mind of the pupil at the same time" ("Education" 1860: 197). Meanwhile, in Japan, the 1870s and 1880s saw an overall boom in translations, mostly from English, of informational and literary texts. School readers, a hybrid of the two, were introduced by Japanese educators who had studied

12 The institution of the German-language *Lesebuch* was well established enough by 1889 that a history could be written about it, featuring literally hundreds of discrete publications, divided by genre. See Fechner, *Geschichte des Volksschul-Lesebuchs* (1889). In North America, "William Holmes McGuffey, the nineteenth century's most famous author of reading texts, died in 1879, the same year that the seventh edition of his successful textbook series appeared." *McGuffey's Readers* were first published in 1837 and were widely used for almost a century (Venezky 2009: 415). Galan discusses the *tokuhon* as a Meiji-period innovation in "Language Textbooks Following the Meiji Restoration."


12 WILLSON'S FIRST READER. [PART II.

LESSON II.

I go in. We go in. They go in. See us go in. Now let us all go in. We may go in. They will let us go in.

May I go in with you′? You may go in if you wish. You and I may go in if we can. May all of us go in′? Yes‵; we may go in‵.

Now we are in‵. Do see us‵! Are you in deep now′? Do you like it′? Can you get out′?

You are wet now. Come out and get dry. Will you come′?

Do not wade too far. Now will you take my boat, and put it down′?

Do you see me hold up my boat′? You will see that my boat will sail well.

wish	like	wade	down	sail
deep	come	boat	hold	well

Figure 35.1 *The First Reader of the School and Family Series* by Marcius Willson, printed in 1861. Note the effort to reproduce children's dialogue as they play, and the list of featured vocabulary at the bottom of the page.

abroad, or foreign educators who had been hired to teach in Japan at the invitation of the government. Marcius Willson's series reinvented itself in Japanese via this route, becoming the widely used *Shôgaku tokuhon* (Elementary School Reader), loosely translated and edited by Tanaka Yoshikado (1841–79) (1st ed., 1873; Figure 35.2).[13] The demand for Western

13 Dutch missionary and hired foreign teacher G. H. F. Verbeck (1830–98) had recommended the adoption of the readers to the Japanese Ministry of Education in the early 1870s (Koga 1991: 53).


むときハ復出づること、
能ハざるべし、○汝の衣
裳ハ、濕ひたらバ陸よ上
りて、これを乾すべし、○
汝ハ、この小舟よ乗らん
とするか、○小舟ハ覆へ
り易き故漫よ乗るべか
らバ、もし過つ時ハ水よ、
陥りて其命を失ふこと
なるべし、」

Figure 35.2 The corresponding page from Tanaka Yoshikado's free translation of Willson's reader, *Shôgaku tokuhon*, printed in 1874. The boat in this illustration is not a toy, and the boys are in Japanese dress. They address each other as *nanji*, or "thou." The book is a woodblock print, still the standard and cheaper to produce in the early Meiji period.

knowledge was such that, in 1885, facsimiles of the original Willson reader were also published in Japan, probably for both children and adults learning the English language (e.g., Willson 1885).

Even at the elementary school level, where significant time was devoted to reading acquisition itself, literacy meant more than simply knowing how to read. Because of educators' ideological goals, it also signified acquiring "mastery over the processes by means of which culturally significant information is coded" (De Castell and Luke 1983: 373). Using imagery, language, and narrative, school readers were tasked with inducting children into the prevailing social order, and at the turn of the twentieth century, expectations of children's "mastery" over various kinds of approved information

increased. School readers of Japan's Taishô period (1912–26) taught the basics of reading but were also carefully designed to inspire conceptions of nation and the growing Japanese empire (Cave 2016: 3). Readers for English children, heirs to an older and more extensive empire, also sought to evoke patriotic pride and duty, "and establish a national (and colonial) sign community" (Brass 2013: 43). In materials deriving from the fabular, folk heroes from Momotarô to Robin Hood were enlisted in the name of moral virtue and service to the nation.[14] Where verisimilitude was favored, children named Tarô and James engaged in wholesome play and cheerful work, as in Willson's *School and Family Readers*; and literary excerpts were usually chosen for their aesthetically sophisticated but accessible expression of national character.[15] Like their counterparts the world over, readers thus offered more than a reading lesson; rather, they used literary, imaginative materials to teach children how to develop patriotic personalities. The belief that readers could help build a linguistic foundation for a culturally defined selfhood meant that politicians, writers, and educators clearly accepted the ideological powers of literature, deploying it to instil in children "a vocabulary and syntax of national identity" that they would hopefully learn to deploy as loyal and productive adult citizens (Heathorn 2000: 4).

The Growing World of Children's Literature

The growth of a young, literate population created by the influx of children into developing school systems was closely linked with unprecedented expansion in the broader market for children's literature. Around the turn of the century, reading textbooks suddenly became "big business" in the United States, China, and many other places, causing a spillover effect into other children's genres and media as teachers, librarians, and parents sought to shape children's tastes outside the classroom as well.[16] Most obviously, this

14 "Kintarô and Momotarô, the folk heroes of tales known by virtually every Japanese child, were drafted for use in both beginning readers and *shûshin* [morals] texts" (Giddings 1988: 77). British school readers did the same, "[t]he telling of popular folk tales, such as Robin Hood . . . [being] similarly prefaced or recast with social prescriptions in mind" (Heathorn 2000: 10).

15 Progressive German educator Heinrich Wolgast (1860–1920) took the idea of verisimilitude even further, arguing that the best choices to cultivate children's literary taste would center depictions of the homeland (*Heimat*), and be written in the dialect children used at home (Wolgast 1905: 15).

16 Venezky describes the US case in "From McGuffey to Dick and Jane" (2009: 415). In China, it was no exaggeration to say that "the most important development in the turn-of-the-century book market [was] the demand for textbooks that could support the curricula of the changing school system" (Hill 2013: 79).

meant a plethora of new adult-approved genres also designed to please children, so that

> by the end of the 19th century the publishing marketplace was making fine distinctions between readers, and nowhere more so than in the highly stratified area of publishing for children, which deliberately divided its audience into categories and catered for readers of different ages, classes, incomes, interests, and both sexes. (Reynolds 2011: 16)

Providing the basic conditions for this growth were, also, developments in printing technology after 1860 – new typesetting and binding machines, as well as color printing techniques – that allowed increases in book production, larger print runs, and more sophisticated illustrations at lower cost (Göbels 1986: 9).

As publications for children became less expensive and more attractive, a new phenomenon developed: middle-class children in industrialized countries began to cultivate libraries of their own. This phenomenon arrived a bit later in Japan, where folklorist Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), born to a scholarly but poor family in rural Japan, recalled that the only way to get new reading material in his childhood was coming up with convincing ruses to borrow books from wealthier households (2006: 492). Even with the well-to-do, it was usually the parents who owned the books and lent children what they deemed appropriate from their own collections. Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf (1858–1940), living in Stockholm with her uncle as a teenager, had to ask permission to borrow his books – which he, like many other bourgeois Europeans of the time, kept in a locked cabinet (1958: 28). Public children's libraries and library youth services began to spread toward the end of the nineteenth century, with the United States at the vanguard (Farmer 2012: 242). Subscription libraries nevertheless continued to fill the gap, as the memoirs of fin-de-siècle children ranging from Nobel Prize-winner Elias Canetti (1905–94) to best-selling author of historical fiction Yoshikawa Eiji (1892–1962) attest.[17] However, children's access began to increase slowly with the sheer amount of cheap media published specifically for children, which now encompassed a wide variety of literary texts from the lofty to the low. Publishers targeted parents at every price point with publications bearing

17 With his family in Zürich during World War I, Canetti recalls relying on the "Lesezirkel Hottingen," or the Hottingen Reading Circle, which was the most cost-effective way to gain access to the latest books (1977: 219). Yoshikawa's family frequently found itself in financial difficulty, so he often made use of the small private lending libraries common at the time. He remembers precisely the cost of borrowing a volume of popular fairy tales: "one *sen*" (1992: 50).

official seals of approval or deemed acceptable by authorities as supplementary reading.[18] Publishers increasingly made overtures directly to young readers as well, for example by featuring advertisements in children's magazines that appealed to what they perceived as children's unique sensibilities and desires (Van Horn 2003: 126).

In the United States, Europe, and Japan, this allowed classic children's texts to enjoy continued commercial success and increased dissemination and popularity. Authorities generally agreed on the pedagogical value of folk- and fairy tales, which became even more solidly enshrined as a child's first reading material.[19] The fables attributed to Aesop, the most prominent example of the genre, were treasured by adults for the clear morals espoused in every tale; in England and other anglophone cultures, they had been favored reading for children since John Locke's endorsement of them in 1693 as "the only Book almost that I know fit for Children" (Locke 1889: 164).[20] However, the plenitude and variety of Victorian editions – down to Walter Crane's beautifully illustrated *The Baby's Own Aesop* (1887) – demonstrate the fables' transformation into publications made explicitly to please children as well (Wilson 1984: 66). The popularity of the Grimm Brothers' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812) at home and abroad also began with the collection's approval by educators: in Japan, for example, the tales became an instant classic after their introduction during the 1870s by educators hired from abroad. Advocated as suitable teaching material by influential philosopher and psychologist Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), the tales became a success in the area of Japanese moral education (*shûshin*) mainly because Herbart's reasons for supporting them mapped well onto more traditional Confucian ideals (Nagura 2005: 12). While the tales were anthologized in school readers for this reason, they soon found an enduring niche in the commercial children's literary magazines that sprang up in Japan toward the end of the nineteenth century (114).

18 For example, Edmondo de Amicis's Italian best-seller *Cuore* (Heart, 1886) was, as its subtitle proclaimed, a "book for children," but the wholesome and idealized public school setting of the story must also have appealed to the parents who were to buy it for them.

19 Influential German educator Heinrich Wolgast (1860–1920) is one representative of this view. He encouraged the reading of *Märchen* by young children because he regarded the genre as "real literature and can, with all its poetic elements, properly prepare the child's sentiment for the higher narrative forms they will subsequently encounter" (Wolgast 1905: 10).

20 The first English translation of *The Fables of Aesop* appeared in 1484, printed by William Caxton (Aesop and Caxton 1889).

This cross-cultural proliferation of textual variants extended beyond the fairy tale to novelistic narratives for older children, emphasizing the point that world children's literature came about not because of "stand-alone, high-quality texts of literary fiction" – but rather "the compulsion to repeat" culturally current narrative formulae via a variety of popular publication formats, including series fiction (Reimer et al. 1). Children's genre fiction of the extended fin de siècle, which developed along internationally shared narrative paths, performed this repetition through translation and adaptation as well. The travel/adventure story probably saw the most phenomenal growth in this period. It took the shape, for example, of melodramatic *Kolportage* novels set in exotic, colonial locales, like most works by popular German writer Karl May (1842–1912).[21] Foreign adventure stories in serialized translation were popular in Japanese subscription magazines marketed to middle-class children – an example being *Kojiki Ôji* (The Beggar King, 1898), a variant of Mark Twain's historical adventure *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), which appeared in seminal children's magazine *Shônen sekai* (Boys' World). Adapted versions of intergenerational classics like Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) made appearances all over the globe, published as part of collectible sets with names like *Every Child's Library* (London) or *Sekai otogibanashi* (Children's Stories from Around the World, Tokyo) (Figure 35.3). Thematically capacious and narratively flexible, the adventure story as a transnational genre was also the principal discursive space for children to explore their identities as national and international citizens.

Fictionalized travelogues experienced a particular vogue internationally, teaching geography and cultural mores with a good dose of action and adventure. The domestic landscape was one primary focus, with G. Bruno's *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants* (Two Children Travel France, 1877) appearing alongside similar nationally specific efforts like *Il viaggio per l'Italia di Giannettino* (Giannettino Travels Italy, 1877) by *Pinocchio* author Carlo Collodi (1880–83) and Selma Lagerlöf's *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* (Nils Holgersson's Wonderful Journey Across Sweden, 1906–7). These popular books, used in schools, were not only well loved by generations of children, but also instrumental in helping build national unity and pride. In the case of Lagerlöf, Swedish

21 *Kolportage* historically refers to cheaply produced "penny-dreadful" literature sold by itinerant merchants. Karl May's *Waldröschen, oder die Rächerjagd rund um die Erde* (The Little Rose of the Forest, or: A Quest for Revenge around the World, 1882–84) was the most popular German-language serialized novel of the nineteenth century and was read by adults and children alike.



Figure 35.3 *Robinson Crusoe* becomes *King of the Deserted Isle: The Castaway Story of Robinson* in volume five of Iwaya Sazanami's 100-volume series Children's Stories from Around the World.

reviewers commended the narrative as particularly suited to the "child mind" – but also noted admiringly that "it is as though the book had sprung direct from the soul of the Swedish nation" (Howard 1907: xii, viii). Some of these national(ist) works themselves traveled abroad, where Nils, for example, often retained his nationality and therefore served as a Swedish geography lesson to foreign children as well.[22]

Travels to strange lands, whether fictional or real, were even more popular, with works such as *Al Polo Australe in velocipede* (To the South Pole By Bicycle, 1895) by Emilio Salgari (1862–1911) or *Deux ans de vacances* (Two

22 The author-approved US translation of *Nils* even endeavors to "faithfully [interpret] the author's local and idiomatic expressions" ("Publisher's Note" in Lagerlöf 1907).



Figure 35.4 Briant and Moko work together to right their ship in an 1888 edition of Jules Verne's *Deux ans de vacances*. While Moko is an active character and part of the group, he is a ship's hand and clearly in a subservient position to the white boys, including the French hero, Briant, whom he addresses as "monsieur."

Years' Vacation, 1888, Figure 35.4) by Jules Verne (1828–1905) positing the wider world as "a space in which to encounter and then reflect upon national identities and differences" in a way that encouraged curiosity about the Other but often reinforced cultural/racial stereotypes and colonial objectives (Schacker 2003: 2). The power structures inherent in these influential works – usually manifested in the primacy of the white protagonists over characters of other nationalities and races – were often perpetuated in translation, as in the first Japanese translation of Verne's book.[23] Similarly,

23 A free relay translation from English by Morita Shiken, entitled *Jûgo shônen* (Fifteen Boys, 1896), nevertheless preserved the original Western nationalities of the boys, who are, despite the French nationality of the author, mostly British.

new works created in their image could reconfigure these power structures to suit the local context, as in Izumi Kyôka's popular story "Yamatogokoro" (The Japanese Spirit, 1894), "a tale of a boy who, with the help of his faithful pet dog," quite predictably asserts his national superiority by "subduing a violent foreigner" (Giddings 1988: 88).

Children's experiences of these stories were generally unmotivated by political concerns, of course, and governed instead by feelings of wonder. Philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) is not unusual in recalling how adventures and travelogues opened up a global vista in his childish imagination:

> I turned to the first page in a grave and ceremonious mood, feeling like someone who had just set foot upon a new land. And indeed it was a new land: one in which Cairo and the Crimea, Babylon and Baghdad, Alaska and Tashkent, Delphi and Detroit found themselves piled together like the gold medallions I was in the habit of collecting from cigar boxes. (1950: 114)

Citing exotic places popular in the adventure novels of the day, the adult Benjamin may speak the language of the European explorer when he acknowledges the colonial nature of the adventure story. Even so, the recollection of his childish awe at being transported to foreign landscapes – magically, through the power of story – is not to be discounted. This representative genre of world children's literature was clearly, for most young readers, their first opportunity to experience the world – one that was bigger than ever before, even if it was not an ideologically or politically neutral space.

In short, world children's literature had by 1930 become a significant transnational discursive site in which the ideal of children's innate creativity continually struggled against political expediency for primacy. In an era increasingly marked by nationalist rhetoric and international conflict, Paul Hazard's pioneering book on comparative children's literature *Les Livres, les enfants et les hommes* (*Books, Children, and Men*, 1932) poignantly captures the extent to which progressive intellectuals had invested hope in children and the books made for them:

> Yes, children's books keep alive a sense of nationality; but they also keep alive a sense of humanity. They describe their native land lovingly, but they also describe faraway lands where unknown brothers live. They understand the essential quality of their own race; but each of them is a messenger that goes beyond mountains and rivers, beyond the seas, to the very ends of the world in search of new friendships. Every country gives and every country

> receives – innumerable are the exchanges – and so it comes about that in our first impressionable years the universal republic of childhood is born.
>
> (Hazard and Mitchell 1944: 146)

One of the first statements by a scholar to recognize the existence of a globally shared children's literature, Hazard's statement also indirectly addresses the international political tensions of the time. Hazard hopes that, by growing up reading a shared body of literature, children will become parents to boys and girls who retain the wisdom gained in the "universal republic of childhood." Children, like the books they read, are wise enough to recognize that national pride does not preclude international friendship, he contends. Surely such children, fed upon quality world children's literature, will grow to become ambassadors for peaceable international exchange.

Hazard (1878–1944), who died in Paris just before the end of World War II after choosing to return to his Nazi-occupied home country from the safety of the United States, must have known that the truth was not so simple. Viewed from the perspective of international publishing, world children's literature, like its adult counterpart, has been shaped by the asymmetrical power relationships and "trade imbalances" that characterize literary contact and transfer (Venuti 1995: 15). The example of Japan in the discussion above shows that "there is no symmetry in literary interference. A target literature is, more often than not, interfered with by a source literature which completely ignores it," meaning in this case that the enormous volume of translations into Japanese during the Meiji period was not reciprocated in the European languages (Even-Zohar 1990: 62). Similarly, children experienced the world of children's literature only as "translationscapes," or "the sum total of texts of a given linguistic tradition available in another," which meant a glut of works from certain traditions and a dearth of ones from others (Smith 2010: 7).

Despite these repudiations of universality, however, Hazard's belief in the power of children's literature to promote intercultural understanding and peace became a call to action in the postwar period, one that continues to inform and expand the international discourse on world children's literature today. A transnational and interdisciplinary mix of teachers, authors, translators, publishers, educationists, librarians, and literary scholars now participate in international organizations founded in the latter half of the twentieth century, such as IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People, founded 1952), the Bologna Children's Book Fair (founded 1964), or the IRSCL (International Research Society for Children's Literature, founded

1969). This robust and dynamic professional interest in the genre is accompanied by a continually growing demand for children's books in international markets.[24] Even as trade imbalances continue to exist, publishers note an increased desire for more books with diverse and quality content tailored to young readers.[25] Certainly, we may speculate that the world republic of children's literature is still experiencing growing pains. Nevertheless, since its foundation in the late nineteenth century, it has continued to expand its borders more quickly, more unselfconsciously, and more generously than its adult counterpart.

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24 An industry report from 2015 indicated that the "[c]hildren's share of print markets is averaging 34% across the board internationally" (Gilmore 2015).

25 Even in the US market, which is notorious for its lack of engagement with translation in any genre, there has been a recent "proliferation of books in translation for children and young adults [that] has brought imaginative stories from around the world to new readers" (D'Alton 2018).

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PART VII

⋆

SCALES, POLYSYSTEMS, CANONS

36

Spatial Scale and the Urban Everyday: The Physiology as a Traveling Genre (Paris, St. Petersburg, Tiflis)

HARSHA RAM

Genre, Scale, and World literature

World literary studies today seem caught between several competing spatial models: on the one hand, an abstract globalism, frequently mapped as a dynamic system of hierarchical relations between centers and peripheries, and – on the other – an insistence upon cultural specificity and artistic agency, verifiable to the extent that it is site-specific, or as a material circuit of exchange traceable as a series of interconnected networks.

In essence, we are faced with three distinct if not antithetical understandings of literary space. Resting as it does on the foundational assumption of a *unified* – albeit *uneven* – planetary scale, the center/periphery model underpins some of the most influential theorizations of world literature to have arisen in recent decades (see Casanova 1999; Moretti 2000: 54–68; Jameson 2002; Parry 2009: 27–55; and WReC 2015). Most commonly derived from world-systems analysis, these theories model the dynamic of literary circulation across world regions according to the uneven access to socio-economic and cultural resources which distinguishes the world's dominant core from "semi-peripheral" and "peripheral" regions (see Wallerstein 1979; and Hopkins, Wallerstein et al. 1982). The inequalities between center and periphery are perceived as the by-product of two distinct spatial logics proper to the modern era: the deterritorializing dynamic of the expanding world market and the reterritorializing effect of the prevailing Westphalian system of sovereign and competing nation-states. It might well be argued that alternatives to the planetary scale of world-systems theory merely privilege one of these two spatial logics over the other,

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without examining the deeper correlation between the nation-state and the market.[1] Site-specific scholarship as practiced by area studies specialists thus reifies local, national, or regional space (the latter often the legacy of premodern world-systems), while the network model views world literature not as a fixed canon of texts but as whatever is gained, culturally speaking, when texts undergo translation and transnational circulation (Damrosch 2003: 3).[2] Implicitly or explicitly, then, each model privileges the determining force of a given spatial *scale* – put simply, the global versus the local/national/regional, – or a specific *patterning* of space – vertical structure versus horizontal network. To place these models in dialogue by rendering them pertinent to distinct levels of scalar analysis is one goal of this chapter.

How, then, do things stand with literary genres? Fredric Jameson long ago argued that the "strategic value" and "mediatory function" of genre lay in its "allow[ing] the coordination of immanent formal analysis of the individual text with the twin diachronic perspective of the history of forms and the evolution of social life" (1981: 105). Jameson's formulation has matched a decline, within genre studies, of strictly taxonomic approaches which regard genre as a normative means of grouping texts according to a set of shared formal and thematic traits. Genres are increasingly regarded not only or primarily as features *of* texts, but as frames serving to mediate *between* texts, their authors, and their readers. As such genres enact an evolving social contract between writers and their public. Such a contract does not preclude recurrent formal features and thematic topoi, but it also requires a regulative frame materially manifest as a work's paratextual apparatus. The latter may explicitly identify the genre to which a work is said to belong or, at the very least, highlight the pragmatics of where and to whom the work is addressed or to be performed: both gestures point beyond the work to the wider literary field in which it circulates and which it seeks to modify. These elements of the generic contract in turn correspond to distinct levels of sociality. Firstly,

1 Pheng Cheah makes this point forcefully: "To think of the dynamics of world literature in terms of those of a global market is precisely to think of world literature as mimicking those global forces, of being a displaced and delayed communication of socio-economic forces at work in the real world" (2014: 308). For Cheah, literature's worldliness is in fact ontologically distinct from the economic logic of globalization, because the latter is spatial, while the former is temporal. Cheah's insistence that literary semiosis is something different from capitalization restores the transformative and "world-making" power of literary creativity (309). One wonders, however, whether the "world versus globe" argument renders what is in fact a dialectic into two irreconcilable antinomies.

2 Theo D'haen suggests that Damrosch's mapping of world literature would result in "networks of partially overlapping ellipses in space and in time, leading to changing constellations over time" (2012: 416).

literary forms are seen to emplot or enact representations of social relations, or perform their symbolic abstraction. Secondly, literary forms circulate as material products within a specific literary field, typified by a dynamic genre system and a print market in which they are produced and consumed. Thirdly, the literary field is in turn embedded in a wider set of social relations, involving structures such as the family, class, artistic networks, and the state, as well as concrete or interpellated publics constituted by the act of reading, listening, or viewing. Yet the pragmatic-contractual model cannot readily explain the persistence of genres over time nor their mobility through space: the correlation between generic markers and sociality would appear subject to multiple variables, including the spatial and temporal remove arising between a given text and the genre or genres it references.

Novel theory has dealt with this dilemma in sweeping if suggestive ways. Even as the novel is regarded as the paradigmatic narrative form of modernity, it is also said to be marked by a totalizing imperative, a cognitive mapping of the social whole, a task formerly seen as the purview of myth or epic. In inheriting the task of expressing a mimesis of totality, the novel is necessarily embedded in these older forms, whose correlation can be celebrated as progress (the novel being capable for Mikhail Bakhtin of cannibalizing older genres in a perennial search for a literary form adequate to the dialogism of social life) or as devolution (the novel being for György Lukács marked by a disjuncture between hero and the outside world that was unknown to the epic) (Bakhtin 1975: 447–83; Lukács 1977: 66; see also Hale 2006 and McKeon 2000).

This amalgam of theoretical orientations – expressive-ontological, formal-historicist, and pragmatic-contractual – also characterize the spatial dimension of novel theory. In addressing the worldwide portability of the novel form, Franco Moretti has proposed an essentially diffusionist model of novelistic evolution, typified "most frequent[ly]" by a wave-like "movement from the centre to the periphery," from the West to the non-West (2003: 76). Moreover, "in cultures that belong to the periphery of the literary system, the modern novel does not first arise as an autonomous development but as a compromise between western formal influence (usually French and English) and local materials" (2003: 58). A curious equivocation arises in Moretti over the precise morphology of the local: the latter is, for Moretti, at once "material" and "reality," "form" and "narrative voice" (58, 64, 65). Given the generative priority accorded to metropolitan forms, Moretti has been criticized for not according the dynamic of local appropriation adequate weight, even as he recognizes the cultural logic of the global periphery as constituting the "rule" rather than the "exception" within the contemporary

world literary system. "What is crucially absent from the aerial view of global flows and circulation," argues Francesca Orsini, "is the local," unless the latter is viewed as "produced by the global" (2015: 351). Orsini's eloquent insistence on the "multilingual local," however necessary, must amount to more than the disciplinary vindication of area-studies expertise.[3] Orsini's empirical case study – the multilingual and multigeneric literary world of early modern North India – does not in itself serve to dismantle Moretti's model, which in fact posits "*two* world literatures, – one that precedes the eighteenth century . . . involving a mosaic of separate 'local' cultures" and a second, the "contemporary world literary system," being the "product of a unified market" and generating "new forms mostly by convergence" (2011: 75). Moretti can rightly be faulted for simplifying or misidentifying the local, as well as for regarding the commodity logic of the world market as a singular and homogenizing force, rather than as producing unevenness everywhere as a matter of course. Orsini, meanwhile, marshals the legacies of the early modern to critique the contemporary, without recognizing that world-systems theory ascribes distinct spatiotemporal dynamics to both.

It is my operative assumption that Moretti's and Orsini's models of literary space are *not*, in fact, incompatible, acquiring their relative pertinence as a result of a theoretical determination of spatial (and temporal) *scale*. The goal of this article is to reconcile both models as distinct moments of a necessarily *multi-scalar and cross-scalar* method of analysis (see also Ram 2016). In the pages to come I will seek to elaborate some of the empirical and theoretical challenges involved in multi-scalar and transregional analysis, that is to say, the scholarly study of how texts and genres circulate and mutate as they move between multiple, distinct centers, as well as between centers and multilingual borderlands. My generic focus will not be the novel but the *physiology* or *physiological sketch*, a popular quasi-journalistic genre dedicated to the taxonomic description of mores, customs, and social types found in the modern city. The heyday of the physiology coincided with the July Monarchy in France (1830–48), not coincidentally the period during which the French bourgeoisie rose to dominance, and when modernity itself came to be marked, in Margaret Cohen's words, by the "creation of the everyday as a practice" (1996: 227). It was at this time that quotidian life became the object of intense reflection across Europe, whether in the nascent social sciences or in new representational forms, from the realist novel to genres on the very margins of literature. One such genre was the physiology, which gave rise to a sustained poetics of the *local everyday*,

3 On the limits of area studies and alternative models of time-space, see Harootunian 2005.

understood not as the immemorial routine of tradition but as the mutable materiality of modern life as manifested by people, practices, sites, and things. The stated goal of the nineteenth-century physiology was to provide taxonomies and itineraries of the familiar but overlooked phenomena of a generally urban existence; its effect was equally to make social space palpable as a process and as a practice, an experiential present marked by the varied, discontinuous but coexisting rhythms which comprise the everyday.

The transnational circulation of the physiology has become of the object of renewed attention in recent decades. In *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century* Martina Lauster attributes the Europe-wide popularity of the physiology to its ability to give verbal and visual form to the general transition from "polite to mass culture" most evidently manifested in the great metropolises of Europe (2007a: 24). In Paris and London, Berlin and Vienna, sites of a civilization then on the verge of the "commodification and reification of all aspects of life," the physiological sketch spread thanks to innovations in publishing and print culture as well as to the rise of "social type[s] reproducible as printed type," offering a model of "middle-class introspection," the "moral grammar" of a modernity increasingly identified with new modes of circulation and consumption (309, 85, 22, 314). Lauster's work offers a significant reassessment of the physiological sketch, which had been dismissed by Walter Benjamin – arguably its most influential reader in the twentieth century – as a "petty-bourgeois genre . . . harmless and perfectly affable" (2003: 18–19).[4] Yet even as she questions Benjamin's assessment, rehabilitating the physiological sketch as a self-reflexive mode of social consciousness if not critique, Lauster's account, like Benjamin's, remains avowedly within the confines of Western Europe.

The pages to come propose a somewhat different itinerary. They begin with an account of the Parisian physiology, focusing on its protagonist, the iconic urban figure of the flâneur, before moving to St. Petersburg, the site of the physiology's dramatic initial success on Russian soil. The physiological sketch was then adapted to the circumstances of Russia's own imperial borderlands, specifically in the city of Tiflis (today Tbilisi), the colonial administrative capital of Russian Transcaucasia in what is today the republic of Georgia. The fate of the physiology in the Caucasus has yet to be studied, while the physiology's successful Russian adaptation – a story familiar to Russianists[5] – raises further questions about genre as a formal construct and social marker in world literature.

4 For a very different account, which insists on the physiology's intimate relationship with critical realism, see Iakimovich 1963: 153–81, 197–230.

5 See Tseitlin 1965; Kuleshov 1991: 216–43; and Marullo's outstanding introduction to his translation of *Petersburg: The Physiology of a City* (2009: xix–xci).

The trajectory I propose to follow, in tracing the physiology from its Parisian beginnings via Russia to the boundaries of Europe and Asia, would appear to confirm the centre/periphery model of literary circulation. At the same time, the movement of the physiology beyond France raises additional questions about the nature of modernity outside western Europe. The modernizing mission which in France fell to the bourgeoisie was accomplished in nineteenth-century Russia by an autocratic *ancien régime*, caught in an increasingly antagonistic relationship with the Russian intelligentsia. This dynamic lent an entirely different color to the Russian physiology, both in terms of its textual representation of the urban everyday and in terms of the entirely distinct place the physiology acquired in the Russian literary field, within which prose had only recently begun to displace the lyric. The fate of the physiology in Russia and Georgia, then, will require a nuancing of our understanding of the modern world system as a model for world literature, specifically in its insistence that bourgeois relations of production have been the principal means of correlating the global and the local in the modern era.

My desire, then, is to move beyond cultural specificity, the easy refuge of specialists and proponents of "alternative modernities." Drawing on the work of Henri Lefebvre and Harry Harootunian, I wish to propose an account of a traveling genre that acknowledges centers, peripheries, and the movements between them as a *dual* process: firstly, as the production of (abstract) *space*, readily mappable as sites marked by the accumulation of economic and cultural resources gained through the domination and peripheralization of rural and colonial hinterlands, and secondly as the production of (sensous) *place*, manifested in the physiology as an articulation of the urban everyday in its asynchronous spatiotemporal rhythms (see Lefebvre 1986; Harootunian 2000). A simultaneous awareness of space *and* place, I suggest, will prevent us from misreading dominant centers as sites of pure origination as well as fetishizing peripheral locations as sites of a still unsullied *couleur locale*.

The *Physiologie* in Paris: The Flâneur and the Marketplace

Derived from the natural sciences – principally biology and medicine – where it had designated the scientific study of living organisms and bodily processes, the French term *physiologie* underwent a significant semantic extension in the early nineteenth century involving its displacement from the natural to the social sciences. In 1874 Larousse's *Grand dictionnaire universel* noted an

"irresistible craze" for the "study of manners [*étude des moeurs*] bearing the name 'physiology'" which had arisen in France "around 1840" (918). In seeking to analyze "all the professions, all the characteristic types" of human society, the scope of the newly ascendant genre was at once "vast," in being able to "encompass absolutely everything," and yet specific, in examining every phenomenon "down to the least particularity" (918). At once infinitely expansive and strictly delimiting, the physiology completed its expansion from the sciences into the realm of letters over the course of the July Monarchy. To justify the transposition of scientific method onto the study of society, Honoré de Balzac would refer in 1830 to the recent precedent of "Lavater, Gall and other physiologists" who had "found the secret of divining people's moral, physical and intellectual sympathies through the thoughtful inspection of their physiognomies, their gait, their skulls" (1940: 62). The pseudo-science of physiognomy had sought to derive a set of normative standards of physical beauty as well as moral character from the external features of individuals – from their silhouette and profile to specific facial proportions.[6] The nineteenth-century physiology extended the analytical principle of an observable or legible externality to the study of social customs and manners. What emerged was a worldly "hybrid of science, art and popular culture" that moved between the inventorizing of specific social types characterized by professional activity, clothing, and behavior and intimations of city life glimpsed in passing as fragments of an interlocking whole (Lauster 2007a: 211). Primarily a form of particularizing – and overwhelmingly Parisian – urban ethnography, the physiology ramifed in multiple directions, from descriptive accounts of prevalent mores, fashions, professions, and sites of leisure and consumption to prescriptive manuals of taste and *savoir-vivre*.[7]

A significant milestone in the transformation of the book form itself into a commodity intended for mass consumption, the French physiology appeared in two formats. The first involved serially published volumes, encyclopedic in aspiration, collectively authored and distributed by subscription, such as the *Paris ou le livre des Cent-et-un*, published in fifteen volumes between 1830 and 1834,[8] or *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* (1840–42), whose

6 The key text is Johann Kaspar Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*, published between 1775 and 1778, which appeared French in 1806–9.

7 For an account of the thematic range, geographical provenance, and material appearance of the French physiology during its heyday in the early 1840s, see van Biesbrock 1978: 72–199; for an account of stylistic and generic affiliations, see Preiss 1999.

8 The Preface to Volume I of *Paris ou le livre des Cent-et-un* (1831) states that the "plan is to review modern Paris as it actually is" in its "multiplied, tricolour" state, for which no

eight illustrated volumes authored by 130 contributors strove to cover all the social classes and professional vocations of France, from Paris to the provinces.[9] The second format – pocket-size books of around 120 pages and costing 1 franc each – arose as the parodic reduction of the encyclopedic pretensions of the collective series: some half a million circulated in France alone between 1840 and 1842 (Sieburth 1985: 39–42). Both the serial volumes and the pocket-books of the 1840s took advantage of recent advances in visual design to combine text and illustration: indeed the word *type* – which in the original Greek signifies "impression," "outline" as well as "pattern" – referred at once to the verbal rendering of a human figure and to wood engravings of the same, distinguished by dress, accessories, or professional activity, sketched as a silhouette against the blank surface of a page, with little or no situational background (see Le Men 1993). The physiology was, thus, the by-product of a revolution in print technology no less than of social-scientific and journalistic discourse. With the mass production of illustrated books now commercially viable, the physiology catered to an expanding urban readership with little use for high literature. "These days," declared the anonymous author of *Physiologie des physiologies* (1841), "a serious book is a nonsensical idea . . . Ask any bookseller for a good book . . . and he will offer you a Physiology" (28).

Animating the French physiology, its consistent authorial subject as well as its occasional object of scrutiny, was the flâneur, pedestrian denizen of the streets of Paris. When in 1863 Charles Baudelaire famously defined the flâneur a "passionate observer" of city life whose "element" was the "crowd," who existed "amidst the ebb and flow of movement" in order to "see the world" while himself "remain[ing] hidden," the poet was generalizing and updating a decades-long discursive and social history to which the physiologies of the July Monarchy had given shape and form (1976: 691–92).[10] In the

single writer would suffice; hence the need to attract "all the contemporary imaginations with their diverse colours" (vi–vii). From the library to the mortuary to domestic interiors, from the bibliophile to the charlatan to the police inspector, *Paris ou le livre des Cent-et-un* shows a marked interest in bourgeois Paris, even as the materials published in its volumes cannot all be classified as "études des moeurs." Unlike later encyclopedic physiologies *Le livre des cent-et-un* was not illustrated.

9 *Les français peints par eux-mêmes: Encyclopédie morale du XIX-e siècle* (8 vols.; Curmer 1841–42) generated 22,700 subscribers within a short period of time (Tseitlin 1965: 53). In the Introduction, Jules Janin justified its massive effort as dictated by the drastic changes experienced by the nation: if the seventeenth century knew only the "court and the city," then today the "great kingdom has been sliced into so many small republics, each of which has its laws, its customs, its jargon and its heroes" (Vol. I: x). From Janin's introduction it becomes clear that the encyclopedism of the physiological collection was an attempt to apply the natural scientific model of taxonomy to the increasing differentiation produced by capitalist society.

10 On the flâneur, see Ferguson 1994; Burton 1994; Tester 1994; and Lauster 2007.

select number of French physiologies where subject and object explicitly converge, the flâneur emerges as a singular paradox: all-seeing yet himself invisible, surrounded by the teeming masses yet alone, an everyman endowed with unique powers of discernment, situated on the very confines of urban typology.[11] Capable of classifying all things and people around him, the flâneur himself cannot easily be defined, whether by professional occupation, wealth, rank, social obligation, or patterns of consumption. Always male and always unattached, the flâneur is a limit-case, distinguished only by an ambulatory relationship to urban life and a detached engagement with its external surfaces.

Perhaps the most telling account of the flâneur belongs to Louis Huart, to whom contemporaries would accord the "glory and the crime" of having invented the physiology, at the very least in its pocket-book format, and who is now remembered chiefly for his contributions to the oppositional satirical daily *Charivari* (Texier 1851: 235).[12] Huart's *Physiologie du flâneur* (1841) reproduces the characteristic structure of the pocket-book physiology in its heyday, even as it offers the most exacting disquisition on the flâneur to date. It begins with a mock-zoological definition of the flâneur as exemplary of the entire human race, since "man rises above all other animals for the sole reason that he knows how to stroll about (*flâner*)" (7). For this reason it is fitting to define man as a "bipedal animal, devoid of feathers, in a topcoat (*paletot*), who smokes and strolls about" (8). This "new definition of man" is followed by a series of shorter chapters describing comparable urban types – such as the loiterer (*le musard*), the pounder of pavements (*le batteur de pavé*), the street urchin (*le gamin*), and the out-of-town tourist (*le badaud étranger*) – all of whom fall short of being authentic flâneurs. The book's operative premise and ultimate goal, then, is specification through differentiation, moving from the universal to the particular by invoking a series of variables, both subjective and objective, to reach a working definition of the flâneur: unlike the busy man "who looks without seeing" and the idler (*l'oisif*) "who sees without looking," the flâneur, we are told, both "sees and looks (*le flâneur voit et regarde*)" (120).

What are we to make of this classification of the urban everyday? Like its protagonist the flâneur, the French physiology has been frequently dismissed as a travesty of science as well as literature produced for mass consumption.

11 See "Le flâneur à Paris" (characteristically signed "Un flâneur"), in *Paris, ou le livre des Cent-et-un* (1832, VI: 95–110); Lacroix, "Le flâneur" (1840); and Huart 1841.

12 Cf. Preiss(-Basset) 1999: 6–7. For a useful if tendentious account of Huart's career as a physiologist, see Iakimovich 1963: 202–7.

For Richard Sieburth, the taxonomic differentiations generated by the French physiology create the "*effect* of science whose comic character is located in the obvious lack of fit between the sophisticated technical-scientific nature of the description and the extreme banality of the social type in question" (1985: 45). Hans-Rüdiger van Biesbrock has suggested that the ideological ambiguity of the physiology derived precisely from its unstable relationship to natural-scientific taxonomy: the more serious its relationship to categorization, the more mordant or satirical its social critique; by contrast, the more parodic its taxonomies, the more whimsically entertaining its relationship to the representation of social reality (357–58).[13] The physiology's kinship with novelistic prose is similarly ambiguous. At once an embodied denizen of the streets and an all-seeing yet invisible eye, the flâneur can be said to approximate the phenomenological ambiguity of the omniscient narrator. Yet the physiology falls distinctly short of the vaster ambitions of the urban fictions associated with French naturalism.[14] As Balzac himself noted in his "Avant-propos de la Comédie humaine" (1840), while the novelist, like the physiologist, could be a "more or less faithful . . . painter of human types," he was at the same time required to go beyond a purely taxonomic account of the present, by "studying the reasons or the reason of these social effects, catching the meaning hidden in this immense assemblage of figures, passions, and events," and "meditating . . . as to the ways in which societies deviate from or approach the eternal rule of truth and beauty" (1940: 7). Although its typological aspirations converged with the social analysis offered by the nineteenth-century novel, the French physiology remained a petit-bourgeois and para-literary form, falling well short of Balzac's imperative of correlating surface and depth, or Baudelaire's later call, in *Le Peintre de la vie moderne*, to "draw the eternal from the transitory" (1976: 694).

At the same time, we should not deny the French physiology its critical insight into the Western metropolis. Louis Huart's typology of idlers, loafers, and do-nothings, however playful, serves to elevate the flâneur as privileged witness to the profound transformations taking place in the urban sensorium. In a city where "water, air, fire and earth, love, honour, spirit and matter are being sold, rented out and exploited in all manner of ways," and where

13 Ruth Amossy notes that it was not the typological predilections of the physiology but rather its "vulgarity" or "levity" of tone which were the source of controversy at the time (1989: 121).

14 Although French physiologies, starting with Balzac's *Physiologie du mariage*, frequently identify the flâneur with the artist or poet, the allusions are frequently shallow: cf. Lacroix, "Le Flâneur" (1841), who states that the flâneur "loves the arts like a constitutional monarch. He is a dilettante, a painter, a poet, an antiquarian, a bibliophile" (67).

"under the pretext of embellishment" any form of urban pleasure or spectacle which can be experienced free of charge is being steadily eliminated, "what is left," asks Huart, "for the flâneur to enjoy?" (1841: 46, 98–99). Cognizant of the increasing pervasiveness of commodity culture, a world in which "glass, marble and bronze, once the sole preserve of palaces, today adorn all manner of stores," and acquainted with "every street, every boutique in Paris," the flâneur follows "the will of chance," propelled from "accident to accident," "bump to bump," "find[ing] in all he encounters something to nourish his mind" (102, 121, 123, 124). The flâneur's apparently random movements, in fact, mimic the circulation of the commodity and its consumer: yet even if he "tarries for two hours before the same piece of merchandise," the flâneur – unlike his philistine antithesis the grocer – does not think to effect its purchase, preferring to contemplate "the general look of its design, the effect of its colour, the marriage of tones which compose the ensemble" (124). The authentic flâneur, then, neither recoils from the commodity's phantasmagoric lure nor surrenders blindly to the logic of exchange value. Indeed his principal merit lies in rejecting any instrumentalization of urban space, foreshortening immediate gratification in favor of imaginative reverie:

> [The flâneur's] spirit abandons the display window and returns to the article's manufacturer, transporting itself to the means of its production, surveying the output of his mills, following the manufacturer to the squares of Leipzig, London and St. Petersburg; that is to say, the very same piece of fabric offers him a thousand subjects to reflect upon of which the other onlooker had no inkling, providing the occasion for a long journey into the world of the imagination.
> (124–25)

Lines such as these allow us to modify Walter Benjamin's mordant assessment of the flâneur in his essay "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century":

> In the person of the flâneur, the intelligentsia becomes acquainted with the marketplace. It surrenders itself to the market, thinking merely to look around; but in fact it is already seeking a buyer. In this intermediate stage, in which it still has patrons but is starting to bend to the demands of the market (in the guise of the feuilleton), it constitutes the *bohème*. The uncertainty of its economic position corresponds to the ambiguity of its political function.
> (1986: 21)

Historicized as an "intermediate stage" between feudal patronage and literary commerce, yet already compromised by his gingerly flirtation with market forces, the bohemian flâneur would appear to offer little by way of social insight. Yet Huart's pocketbook, written over a decade prior to the sweeping

renovation of Paris known as *Haussmannisation*, suggests that commodification is a *process* rather than a completed *state*, one that can be imaginatively reflected and even reversed through the power of reverie: unlike the buyer, the flâneur derives aesthetic pleasure by inverting the dynamic of consumption, retracing the material history of the commodity back through the networks of distribution which service the metropole to its origins in the production process.

Whatever its limitations, the French physiology was a commercially successful means by which to articulate and celebrate a new and distinctly urban modernity. By no means a vehicle of explicit social critique, its voyeurism playful rather than moralizing or sentimental, the Parisian physiology dramatized the modern metropolis to its own inhabitants as a spectacle of social signs and visual surfaces. It registered the uneven rush of sensory impressions assailing the man on the street who lacked recourse to the safety or comfort of an aerial view. These impressions – the experiential present lived at street-level – were refracted and organized through various modes of abstraction, from "scientific" typology to "artistic" reverie, allowing the urban everyday to emerge in the dialectic between place and space.

The *Fiziologiia* in St. Petersburg: Toward a Non-Bourgeois Public Sphere

The rapid adaptation of the physiology on Russian soil reflects the accelerating synchronization of Russian letters with those of Western Europe, following a century during which Russian culture had played a game of catch-up with Europe. Since its founding in 1703, the imperial capital St. Petersburg had served as the site as well as the supreme expression of Russia's cultural modernization. At once the symbol of Enlightenment values and cultural progress and the residence of an absolutist monarchy which had been the initial catalyst for change, St. Petersburg came to embody the antinomies of Russian modernity, increasingly defined by the struggle of Russia's nascent intelligentsia with the forces of an entrenched *ancien régime*.[15] The Russian physiology was drawn into this struggle almost from its inception.

Russians became acquainted with the French physiology in numerous ways, "in theory and practice, in originals, translations and reworkings"

15 For a brilliant recent account of the relationship between literary genre and allegorical figurations of the autocratic state in Russian realism, see Kliger 2018.

(Marullo 2009: xxiii). The memoirs of Dmitrii Grigorovich describe an apparently simple pattern of market inundation and commercially driven imitation by which the French physiology came to be adapted by the competing figures of Faddei Bulgarin – an energetic cultural entrepreneur, influential reactionary, and rumoured police informant – and Nikolai Nekrasov – a disinherited provincial who would give voice to Russia's emergent déclassé intelligentsia:

> Around this time [the early 1840s – *H.R.*] small books under the general title of "physiology" began appearing in great quantities in shops selling foreign books; each book contained the description of some type of Parisian life. The progenitor of such descriptions was the well-known Parisian publication *The French as Depicted by Themselves*. Russian imitations appeared instantaneously. Bulgarin began to publish exactly such books; . . . each of them containing the sketch of a type of Petersburg life . . . Nekrasov, whose practical mind was always on the lookout, conceived the idea of publishing something of this kind as well: he imagined a publication in several volumes entitled *The Physiology of Petersburg*. In addition to types, these volumes were intended to contain scenes of everyday life as well as sketches on the street life and domestic life of Petersburg. (Grigorovich 1987: 80–82).

As in France, the explosion of Russian physiologies in the 1840s was motivated in the first instance by the commercial opportunities made available by a transnationally circulating genre designed to satisfy an expanding reading public eager to discover its immediate urban environs represented accessibly in print. "The trade in Russian mores," declared one reviewer in 1843, "has reached feverish heights: there are even speculators and stock exchanges of such things" (Anon. 1843: 16).

Yet the logic of market circulation, which clearly dictated the physiology's movement from Paris to St. Petersburg, should not be read as the ready monetization of national or local particularism. The animated debates surrounding the physiology in the Russian press, and the physiological almanacs which soon followed, reveal a substantially different theory and practice of the genre on Russian soil. These differences related to literary form, to urban social differentiation as the object of physiological representation, and to the relations of force that arose between the Russian state, the literary market, and competing networks of Russian literati. However commercially driven, the Russian adaptation of the physiology was an eminently *literary* and *political* affair. In the void created by the death of Pushkin and Lermontov as well as by Gogol's ambiguous silence following the publication in 1842 of *Dead Souls*, the physiology emerged as a crucial arena of cultural contestation

between a new breed of radical intellectuals and reactionary literati aligned with the tsarist state.

Literary conservatives associated with the widely read *Northern Bee*, Russia's first daily newspaper to champion the priorities of the state while at the same acknowledging the needs of the emerging private consumer, assailed the underlying premise of the physiological sketch by deriding its social base:

> The French, the Germans and the English have certain literary back lanes which mimic all the literary phenomena of the main street, just as whatever happens in the salon and drawing room is repeated in the kitchen and the servant's quarters. The fact is that everybody in France, England and Germany reads and wants to read. The yard keeper reads, the maidservant reads, the cabby reads, the housekeeper reads. All of these people need their own literature and their own literati . . . The principal merit of any literature of the back-alley is its lack of expense along with readerly accessibility. These two expectations are generating the vast quantities of rubbish inundating the literatures of Paris and London . . . The back-alley readers are in ecstasy over physiologies! (Z.Z. 1843: 322–23)

Striking here is the Russian reviewer's willful refusal to grasp the novelty of mass literacy as representing anything more than the debasement of aristocratic sensibility. In the revealing article "Petersburg Types" (1841), Faddei Bulgarin highlighted the divergent social structures of Europe and Russia as a means to undermine the very possibility of a Russian physiology. "In France," he wrote, "every social class (*soslovie*) has its own characteristics, its own habits, a language filled with expressions of the trade, . . . its favorite places of revelry, its own neighbourhoods . . . theatres, coffeehouses, and fashions. Every social class bears the deep imprint of originality" (87). Unlike France, where "people are in constant movement," thus allowing for "true novels and genuine comedy," the Russian character was distinguishable only in terms of the static traits of its most prominent – and traditional – estates: the nobility, the merchant class and the rural folk (88). For this very reason, Bulgarin argued, Russia could generate manners and customs (*nravy*) but not types (*tipy*): "in our country, how do the professions and trades differ? They do not. An undertaker is the same as an artisan, and when he enters the home of a wealthy deceased person to arrange for his funeral, he in no way differs from the vendor who delivers wood, bricks, hay or straw . . . Government officials do not differ from each other in the slightest . . . Russian merchants are also all of a similar cut. Exceptions to the general rule are exceptions, not types!" (88). In rejecting "typological" analysis in favor of the satirical and edifying study of manners which he himself had cultivated for many years,

Bulgarin was championing far more than his own literary predilections.[16] The critics of the *Northern Bee* were questioning the very possibility of according Russia's amorphous urban "middle strata" (*srednee soslovie*) the internal differentiation and social dynamism which had made them a legitimate object of journalistic and literary interest in France. The stakes of the physiological sketch in Russia were thus both literary and broadly civic.

Opposing the voices of officialdom were the so-called *raznochintsy*, socially displaced literati who, in the words of Julie Buckler, were "neither tied to the countryside by the feudal system nor firmly established in the bureaucratic centers of the large cities . . . The social and spatial mobility of the *raznochinets* thereby determined his consummate literary function – arriving from outside, he sets the plot into motion. Lacking a group affiliation, the *raznochinets* strove to distinguish himself, often through writing, and thus join the pantheon of Russian writers" (2007: 197). Led by the critic and literary canon-maker Vissarion Belinskii and the poet-editor Nikolai Nekrasov, the déclassé intelligentsia embraced the physiological sketch as an instrument of cultural combat. Excoriating Bulgarin's commercially driven and blandly edifying representations of Russian society, Belinskii and Nekrasov also avoided the "levity, playfulness and wit" characteristic of the French physiologies (Belinskii 1955, VII: 80; see also Nekrasov 1843). Their stylistic and ideological orientation was fully evidenced in their crowning achievement, the publication of the multi-author two-volume *Physiology of Petersburg* in 1845. Inspired by *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* but falling well short of its encyclopedic ambitions, *Physiology of Petersburg* was the clarion call of what came to be known as the Natural School of critical realism. Nekrasov identified the two volumes' "difficult, delicate and in some ways dangerous duty" as a probing of the cityscape, not only to "disclose . . . all the sources of what occurs on the street-level; the pace and direction of our civic and moral formation . . . the typical characteristics of all ranks of our population," but also to "reveal secrets spied through keyholes and seized unawares from nooks and corners" (1967, VII: 96). Indeed for Nekrasov the physiology was nothing less than the "story of our inner life [*istoriia nashei vnutrennei zhizni*], deep and obscure, concealed by tinsel and glitter, masked by luxurious façades, sumptuous

16 Premised on the belief that "virtues and vices . . . are found in a perfect balance within human nature," Bulgarin's own studies of Russian manners balanced light entertainment, edifying satire, and the indirect advertising of consumer items (2010a: 47). Bulgarin acknowledged social differentiation in the form of static traits and standard accessories; his goal was moral portraiture rather than the depiction of social dynamism. See Konechnyi 2010: 5–42; Marullo 2009: xxxvi–xxxvii; and Tseitlin 1965: 79–84.

dinners, surface cleanliness and brilliance" (VII: 96).[17] In speaking here of "inner life," Nekrasov's intent was not to introduce psychological interiority, but rather to redefine the physiology away from Petersburg's statist patrimony of architectural monumentalism toward an unsentimental exploration of the city's social underbelly.

The editors' stated goals corresponded to a dramatic loosening of the almanac's generic constraints. *Physiology of Petersburg* is, in fact, not a sketch collection at all but a literary almanac, in which a short story, essays, a satirical poem, and even a theatrical sketch are to be found alongside conventional physiologies. Vissarion Belinskii himself described the volume as a "prose almanac" containing "something like stories, sketches, and sometimes even views expounded in the form of a journal article," all unified by the common goal of "acquainting provincial and especially Petersburg readers" with the capital city (IX: 47). Belinskii's literary criticism of the same years turned repeatedly to the question of the physiological sketch's relationship to *belles lettres*: the representation of social "types" in narrative prose – and even verse – became a key element of Belinskii's programmatic vision for Russian literature.[18] Although a similar diversity of genres is found in the contemporaneous two-volume *Le Diable à Paris. Paris et les Parisiens* (1845–46), the last of the great physiology collections of the 1840s to appear in France, the radical erosion of the generic boundaries of the physiological sketch, *its transformation from a genre to a mode assimilable to the short story and even to the lyric poem*, may well be a Russian legacy.[19]

In his unsigned introduction to the *Physiology of Petersburg*, Belinskii went beyond the formal and representational aspects of the physiological sketch to

17 Nekrasov's comments did not appear in the volume itself, but as part of an unsigned review published in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Vol. 13 (April 5, 1845: 229–31).

18 See Belinskii's reviews of the "physiological tales" of Vladimir Dal' (V. Luganskii), "Ural'skii kazak" and "Russkii muzhik," in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (1955, VI: 559–60, and 1956, X: 42–43, respectively); and his assessment of Dal' as a "true poet" because he "is able to make a typical personage the representative of a social class, elevate him to an ideal . . . in the true sense of reproducing reality in its full truth." See Belinskii, "Russkaia literatura v 1845 godu" (1956, IX: 399). On the physiological sketch and the problem of literary genre in Russia, see Meilakh 1973: 247–58. Belinskii was a practical critic rather than a theorist, but his ideas clearly inform the mature work of Georg Lukács: see Lukács 1964: 97–126.

19 See Hetzel 1845–46; a mediocre Russian translation, stripped of the almanac's erotic and satirical elements, appeared in 1846: see Tseitlin 1965: 60–66, 77–78 and Iakimovich 1963: 285–91. Belinskii explicitly mentions *Le Diable à Paris* in his introduction to the *Physiology of Petersburg*. The introduction was written in October 1844: one wonders, therefore, whether Belinskii had actually seen a copy of the work. A review of *Le Diable à Paris* appeared in *Severnaia pchela* (June 2, 1845) No. 123, while the first part of *Physiology of Petersburg* appeared on March 28 (Z.Z). The features common to the Russian and French almanacs are more likely due to convergent trajectories than imitation.

identify the wider cultural deficiencies the almanac sought to address. Firstly, the publication highlighted a "retinue of talents" who were to "serve as intermediaries" between the higher realm of *belles lettres* and the general public, a need all the more urgent given that Russians "do not have the slightest understanding of the public sphere (*publichnosti*)" (Kuleshov 1991: 9, 11). Secondly, the almanac sought "not to *describe* Petersburg … but to *characterize* its mores and the distinguishing features of its inhabitants" (12). The programme of the emerging déclassé intelligentsia is here evidenced in full: the physiologist served at once to *mediate* between élite culture and the newly literate masses, to typologically *characterize* the masses to themselves, and – ultimately – to *foster* through the discursive act of representation the growth of a self-reflexive public sphere, which Belinskii elsewhere in the almanac identified as the very "foundation of European life" (12).[20]

The threat posed to Russian autocracy by the physiological sketch thus lay not merely in its chosen object of representation, but in the possibility of a *public sphere* arising from a mass readership seeing itself addressed and represented critically in print for the first time. In Europe the public sphere had arisen over the course of the eighteenth century out of changes in the modes of bourgeois sociability, with the rapid diffusion of the periodical press and the rise of theater, café, museum, salon, and concert-going publics defined by education and property rather than rank (Hölscher 1978: 431).[21] Mediating between the private concerns of home and family life and the official realm of state power, what Jürgen Habermas has called the "bourgeois public sphere," consisted of "rational-critical public debate" conducted in print or verbalized in the social spaces where autonomous individuals gathered (1991: 28). Championed as a means by which to oppose the secretive and arbitrary operations of state power, public opinion rested on the "fictitious identity" of what were in fact two distinct, if complementary, modalities: a *literary* public sphere, focused on the subjective realm of affect and the passions, sensibility and interiority, and a *political* public sphere, based on communicative reason rather than force, within which property owners sought to regulate the exchange of both goods and ideas (55–56). As such, the European public sphere acquired the "normative status of an organ for

20 The activities Belinskii associates with the public sphere are the reading of newspapers and journals and attending the theater.

21 The French term *publicité* found its first dictionary definition in 1694 in the context of criminal law: it acquired the meaning of the free exchange of speech and writing only in the second half of the eighteenth century. The German term *Öffentlichkeit* emerged even later, around the turn of the nineteenth century (Hölscher 1978: 446).

the self-articulation of civil society" (74) (See also Calhoun 1992 and Eisenstadt, Schluchter, and Wittrock 2001.)

Unrelenting censorship, low rates of literacy, and the severe limits placed by the state on civil society would prevent anything like a robust public sphere, bourgeois or otherwise, from emerging in tsarist Russia before the 1905 revolution. As Ol'ga Malinova has observed, the nineteenth-century Russian public sphere, such as it was, was typified by "oral exchange, localized in semi-private spaces," in combination with "written communication, whose content was limited by the constraints of censorship (the latter partly overcome by virtue of written manuscripts and foreign editions). This combination allowed for the spread of ideas but allowed few opportunities for their open and critical discussion. The interpretation of socially significant problems was conducted primarily in the milieu of private individuals: the conditions of public discourse did not assume any direct influence exercised by public opinion on the authorities" (2012: 439–40).

A desired goal more than a reality, the Russian public sphere was first articulated within circumscribed networks of literati. Unsurprisingly, it was expressed as an aspirational engagement with a Western European inheritance looking back to the Athenian agora through the eighteenth-century Enlightenment to the more recent writings of the French utopian socialists.[22] In his thirteen "Letters from Abroad" (published between 1841 and 1842 in *Annals of the Fatherland*, then the flagship journal of Russia's progressive intellectuals) the publicist, literary critic, and close associate of Belinskii Pavel Annenkov described the European public sphere as one where "journalistic polemic proceeds with ardour and vigour, parties collide and clash on paper," where "everyone speaks, but without moving beyond the sphere of their private obligations, and disputation resolves all things" (1983: 38–39). Annenkov concluded that for him, "a modest denizen of the North," it was edifying to make a "scientific observation of the struggle of passions as they dissipate in declamatory statements or become sealed in print" (44). It was in a Europe saturated by a lively print culture, a land of "cafés and (innumerable) reading rooms, always crammed with people," where "politics . . . [had]

22 It was under the impact of French utopian socialism that the first generation of Russian radicals articulated their understanding of the public sphere and the civic goals of literature: see Bowman 1954; Kuleshov 1958; Reeve 1959; Malia 1961; Nechaeva 1967; Weber 1971; Terras 1974: 69–76. Terras observes that "owing to censorship considerations" Belinskii never mentioned his French sources in print with the exception of the writers Eugène Sue and George Sand, but points to Pierre Leroux as the "single most important utopian socialist influence on Belinskij" (69, 71): this influence was expressed principally in the promotion of literature and the arts as a vanguard of social progress.

exiled artistry [and] pure inspiration," that Annenkov became the first Russian to observe and report on the new Parisian craze for the pocket-size physiology: "Thousands of little brochures with vignettes and engravings have appeared, literally flooding the libraries. What isn't a physiology these days? There are physiologies of the workman, the deputy, the soldier, the flâneur, etc. etc. Finally there will be a physiology of the glove, a physiology of the cab horse and before you know it you will see the appearance of a physiology of an idle Slav traversing unknown lands with my own portrait in it" (45, 46).

Witticisms aside, Annenkov's letters clearly situate the French physiology as a vital part of a wider European civic culture to be emulated and fostered at home. At the same time the *absence* of a political public sphere in Russia could only lead to its compensatory *substitution* by the realm of letters (unlike the complementarity, verging on "fictitious identity," of the literary and political public sphere which Habermas discerned in bourgeois Europe) (Annenkov 1983: 55–56). This crucial difference was made explicit in Belinskii's contemporaneous article "The General Meaning of the Word 'Literature'" (1842), which distinguished literature (*literatura*) from verbal creativity *tout court* (*slovesnost'*) in the following way: "literature relies on the public sphere (*publichnost'*) and receives its confirmation from public opinion (*obshchestvennogo mneniia*)" (1955, V: 625). If "in France the word 'press' (*la presse*, or book printing) has now come into use to express a concept wider and more general than literature," then in Russia "it was literature which laid the foundations of public culture and public opinion" (V: 626, 653).[23]

The singular urgency of Belinskii's contributions to *Physiology of Petersburg* derives from an expanded sense of the literary field confronting the absence of a wider bourgeois public culture in the Russian capital. "In no way does Petersburg recall Rome, London and Paris," Belinskii observed in the opening essay "Petersburg and Moscow": "If Petersburg resembles any cities at all, it would most likely be the big urban centers of North America, which, like it, were also built according to a calculated plan" (1953, I: 21). The expression of autocratic will and administrative design, St. Petersburg was "devoid of domestic or familial seclusion," a city of exterior surfaces but also of collective gatherings – "the street, popular festivity, the theatre, coffeehouses, places of merriment, in other words, all public establishments" – which nevertheless fell short of a "public sphere in the genuine sense of the word" (24). In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel had viewed modern civil society as "the realm of

23 The article was never published in Belinskii's lifetime.

difference, intermediate between the family and the state" (2001: 154). By contrast, in St. Peterburg the state appeared to overshadow both family life and civil society, leaving only a plebeian public sphere arising from the everyday practices of the urban underclass. If Russian modernity had "developed in a manner opposite to that of Europe, top-down rather than from the bottom-up," then it was Belinskii's implicit goal to invert this logic (Belinskii 1955, X: 22).

The central protagonists of *Physiology of Petersburg* are the socially marginal or geographically peripheral: yard keepers, servant girls, scavengers, pick-pockets, petty tradesmen, organ-grinders, street clowns, retired clerks, court lackeys, ruined speculators, house serfs, drunken landladies, along with the occasional prosperous civil servant. The plebeian or lumpen figures retain their links to the feudal countryside, while the outlying neighborhoods of the lower to middling strata "resemble provincial towns in their architecture and mores" (Grebenka, in Kuleshov 1991: 91). An artificial city inhabited by the displaced and the uprooted, lacking a native population of its own, the imperial capital which emerges from the *Physiology* nevertheless seethes with life. Indeed, sociability is arguably the almanac's most consistent concern, whether in the form of verbal exchange and commercial transaction, or modeled performatively as street spectacle, theater show, spontaneous song, or bouts of drunken revelry. The beating heart of imperial Petersburg is not the chimerical bourgeois public sphere but discrete theatrical publics whose aesthetic taste has yet to evolve into a self-reflexive faculty. Its plebeian apotheosis is the open-air puppet show which concludes Dmitrii Grigorovich's "The Petersburg Organ-Grinders," briefly generating what Thomas Marullo calls a "carnivalesque communit[y] . . . open and spontaneous, informal and free" (2009: lix–lx). Its petit-bourgeois counterpart is the Alexandrinsky Theatre, whose audience is described by Belinskii as constituting "a public in the real, the genuine sense of the word: it lacks varying social strata, consisting entirely of clerical employees [*sluzhashchego naroda*] of a certain rank, it is not a multitude but a single man, respectably dressed and solid . . . holding constantly to the judicious middle . . . like the respectable classes in France and Germany: the bourgeoisie (*burzhuaziia*) or philistines" (Kuleshov 1991: 128). Pinning his hopes on the aesthetic education of Petersburg's theater-going public, Belinskii concludes that its taste "can and indeed must change with time" (128). The "man of the judicious middle" is also the subject of the only poem in the almanac, Nekrasov's "The Civil Servant," a satirical rendering in iambic pentameter of the physical appearance, anodyne tastes, and leisure activities of a Petersburg official

("Chinovnik," in Kuleshov 1991: 142–46). The only establishment figure to be represented in the almanac, the Russian civil servant was then the object of ongoing journalistic and literary debate. Hailed by Belinskii as a "native, the true citizen of Petersburg," the civil servant was at once a cog in the machinery of the state and an outsider for whom the administrative table of ranks was the only means of self-advancement (Kuleshov 1991: 32).[24] Not only is Nekrasov's poem striking for its satirical description of the workaday and domestic life of an average bureaucrat of middling rank, it also contains the only moment in the entire collection in which an urban type as *object* and the déclassé intellectual as authorial *subject* overtly collide: encountering the satirical depiction of a clerk accepting a bribe, the official expresses his astonishment that such a thing could appear in print, exclaiming that "for such displays of impudence authors should be exiled to Siberia!" (146). Here the social mission of the writer collides with the cultural limitations of the representatives of the state.

What have we learned thus far about the physiological sketch as a traveling genre? The popularity of the Russian physiology was determined in the first instance by transnational market forces which flooded local bookstores with French physiologies, thereby stimulating their translation and adaptation to Russian conditions. In France, as in Russia, the physiology served to codify and rehearse the dynamics of social differentiation for a new mass readership. The striking divergences between the French and Russian variants of the genre can be seen to derive from the vastly different class and social configurations obtaining in both countries, as well as from their distinctly configured literary fields. In France the bohemian flâneur came to serve as the physiology's moment of greatest self-reflexivity, its true protagonist and occasional object of study. In the Russian physiology, subject – the déclassé intellectual – and object – the urban masses – would never coincide, except to the extent that neither fitted easily into existing hierarchies of rank and estate. Furthermore, its two principal objects of interest – the plebeian underclass and petty officialdom – whom Belinskii regarded as the bearers of a future public sphere, never did come together as a "middle class" in the European sense: indeed, they mirrored the contradictions of Russian modernization, a lumpenized peasantry and the agents of autocracy, trapped in an uneasy coexistence until the heirs of the déclassé intelligentsia unleashed the revolutions of 1917.

24 The petty clerk often figures in the stories of Gogol and the young Dostoevsky; he was also the subject of a sketch by Bulgarin himself: see "Chinovnik (Ocherk)" (originally published in 1842), in *Peterburgskie ocherki F.V. Bulgarina* (2010a: 329–41).

In approximating the role played in France by the bourgeoisie, Russia's radical literati, like their competitors aligned with the state, in fact pursued an entirely distinct set of aesthetic and civic priorities. In Russia the delineation of social difference acquired a sharply polemical coloration, as a means of stimulating the growth of a public sphere which had yet to emerge rather than reflecting the inroads of commodification on a public sphere already in existence. For these very reasons the physiological sketch would remain central to Russian literature and cultural life, imposing its logic and concerns on high literary genres, from the short story to the lyric. In the absence of a civil society and given the still nascent state of literary prose, the Russian physiological sketch acquired a centrality inconceivable in France.

The Physiology in the Periphery: The Ethnographic Picturesque

It is customary for histories of Russian literature to trace the further evolution of the physiological sketch from St. Petersburg to Russia's vast rural hinterland, where it would confront the realities of serfdom.[25] The concluding section of this chapter takes a somewhat different turn, to recount the lost story of the constitutive role played by the physiological sketch in shaping modern representations of the city of Tiflis (or Tbilisi), the provincial administrative capital of Russian Transcaucasia throughout the nineteenth century, today the capital of the republic of Georgia. The physiological sketch reached Tiflis under the modernizing viceroyalty of Count Mikhail Vorontsov, administrator of the Caucasus from 1844 to 1854: its local manifestations are thus closely tied to the civilizing mission which Vorontsov promoted to compliment as well as mitigate Russia's conquest of the Caucasus.[26] Its earliest champion on Georgian soil was the Russian poet Iakov Polonskii, who spent no less than five years in Tiflis (1846–51). An impoverished provincial whose first volume of verse failed to secure his literary reputation in metropolitan circles, Iakov Polonskii moved south to take advantage of the new professional and cultural opportunities afforded by Vorontsov's reforming administration, working as a state functionary in the Viceroy's chancellery. As an administrator, Polonskii was entrusted with the gathering of statistical data, a task he supplemented with a range of related editorial,

25 See Ivan Turgenev's sketch "Khor' and Kalinych" (1847), which would become the first story in his celebration sketch collection *A Hunter's Notebook* (1852).

26 On Mikhail Vorontsov and the Europeanizing Enlightenment elements of Russian colonial rule in Georgia, see Rhinelander 1996; and Jersild and Melkadze 2002.

journalistic, and literary activities. Unlike the preceding generation of Russian romantics, for whom state service and the literary life were largely antithetical and thus carefully compartmentalized, Polonskii's Georgian years witnessed the renewal of his poetic talents as well as his earliest efforts in prose, in close tandem with his official activities.[27]

The breadth of Polonskii's Caucasian corpus is considerable, varying from statistical, ethnographic, literary, and historical surveys to physiologically inspired verse and prose.[28] Never collected and published in one volume, and today largely unknown even to residents of the city, these scattered texts constitute an unrealized physiological almanac of Tiflis and its environs comparable to Nekrasov's in their urban focus and stylistic range. The specific interest they pose to a study of traveling genre is at once thematic and formal. How was the physiology's rendering of the urban everyday transformed by its shift in locus, from Paris to Petersburg to Tiflis, from the European metropole to a colonial administrative and trading center on the crossroads of Europe and Asia? And how did its geographical mobility affect its formal traits? Polonskii's relevant literary works exhibit a lively interest in the social and ethnic diversity for which Tiflis was celebrated: a literary (originally painterly) strategy one might call the *ethnographic picturesque*. An abundance of visual detail, duly assessed and catalogued, is of course typical of the physiology. Far less typical of the physiological sketch in Paris and Petersburg, but markedly present in Polonskii's work, is an embodied and intrusive authorial self confronting a clearly foreign setting. The sharp polarization between subject and object, unknown to the

27 Polonskii was initially appointed assistant to the head of the Viceroy's chancellery; in 1849 he was made a roving official to the Viceroy. Tiflis officialdom held no personal attraction for Polonskii, but he clearly benefited from the various administrative niches and activities that Vorontsov's Tiflis offered him. See Eikhenbaum, "Poèziia Polonskogo," in Polonski 1933a: xvii–xviii; Orlov 1961: 17–20; and Bogomolov 1963: 40–41.

28 Polonskii's Caucasian works have never been collected, and his non-belletristic writings on the region have not been republished. Among his most significant non-belletristic works are the historical and statistical surveys "Kratkii ocherk nekotorykh gorodov Kavkaza i Zakavkazskogo kraia" (1846a), "Statisticheskii ocherk Tiflisa" (1946b: 7–173), the incomplete physiological sketch "Tiflis na litso i naiznanku," (1850), and "Saiat Nova" (1851), Nos. 1–2.

Twelve of his lyric poems of the time were published locally under the title *Sazandar* (1849): all of his Georgian poetry – some thirty lyrics – can be found in *Ia. P. Polonskii. Stikhotvoreniia i poèmy* (1933a: 38–96). Polonskii's Georgian prose "sketches" – as he himself called them – "Delibashtala. Gruzinskaia skazka (Iz putevykh zapisok 1847 g.)" (1848), "Kvartira v tatarskom kvartale" (1849), and "Tiflisskie sakli" (1853) – can be found in Polonskii 1988: 22–116. For a critical discussion of Polonskii's Caucasian works, see Bogomolov 1963: 1–200, and 1983: 18ff.; Romanenko 2006; Morozova 2010, and Bogomolov 2002: 257–78.

physiological sketch in Europe, is readily explained by the greater cultural distance arising between the author and what he sees. Far from home, the author becomes self-reflexively present, not merely as a seeing eye but as a visible if alien part of the very landscape he surveys. The author's struggle to reconcile (Russian) subject and (local) object within a typological frame serves to stretch the very limits of the genre.

Polonskii's struggle to accommodate *both* self *and* other into the representational framework of the sketch generated a series of formal experiments based on grafting the physiological mode onto older, apparently antithetical genres. Curiously, the two texts by Polonskii in which the dynamic of genre hybridization is most palpable are also the two in which the specific contours of Tiflis's urban landscape are most vividly and memorably identified.[29] The first is Polonskii's earliest Tiflis text, "A Letter to Moscow" (1847), published anonymously in the "unofficial" supplement to the *Transcaucasian Herald*, the provincial news weekly of the Russian authorities. This section, which had become a regular presence barely two years earlier, inaugurated a new cycle of local Russian-language journalism in which Polonskii played a formative role, involving the collaboration of prominent native (Georgian, Armenian, and Turkic) as well as Russian literati under the watchful gaze of the enlightened Viceroy (see Makharadze 1984: 9–20). Polonskii's text contains what may well be the earliest "physiological" account of Tiflis in print, curiously embedded within the genre of the traveler's epistle, a sentimental-romantic genre associated in Russia with the bygone era of poet, travel writer, and historian Nikolai Karamzin (1790s–1820s), although continuously renewed and updated, as evidenced by Annenkov's recent "Letters from Abroad." The goal of sentimental epistolary writing had been to overcome the physical distance between the writer and his addressee through effusive affirmations of shared intimacy. Polonskii's letter to Moscow, by contrast, establishes geographical distance but fails to overcome it through sentiment. The first part of Polonskii's letter reads like a satirical feuilleton whose sole purpose is to demolish the very cult of friendship upon which the epistolary genre was based. Before establishing the primacy of new forms, Polonskii's letter must invoke and partly dismantle the old.

In the letter's most aphoristic passage, Polonskii writes: "Tiflis is – and may Allah forgive my simile – somewhat akin to Janus, its one face fixed upon Asia, the other looking to Europe. The one face bears the flaccid and aging

29 For an account of the relationship between genre hybridization and world literature, as illuminated by the Russian tradition of historical poetics, see Kliger and Maslov 2017 ("Special Section: Historical Poetics in Theory"); Holland 2017 and Kliger 2017.

features of oriental types; the other, still too youthful to convey a fully defined character, hints at a Russian physionomy" ("Pis'mo v Moskvu" [1987: 48]).[30] This passage squarely addresses the challenge posed to physiological representation by an "Asiatic" city in the full throes of colonial modernization. In such a city, ethnographic "types" do not serve merely to designate class or profession: they demand to be read *temporally*, as residues of a way of life soon to be made obsolete, situated in opposition to the still incipient dynamic of Europeanization. This aphorism is in fact the culmination of a striking account of Polonskii's earliest impressions of Tiflis:

> To enter Tiflis by the Moscow or Yerevan checkpoint is to enter two cities which are entirely unlike each other. Here you ride along a wide, regular street – Golovinsky Avenue –; there, ascending from hill to hill, you make your way through the dark, crooked, and chaotically congested streets of the old city. Here, on the right, beyond the River Kura, on the smooth flatland you see the green expanse of the German colony arranged in regular fashion; there, on your left, rise the protruding remnants of ruined fortifications which over nearly a thousand years seem to have grown into the cliff edge where they stand, still preserved by time. Here you find government bureaucrats strolling cane in hand, dressed in fashionable Polish topcoats (*paletots*); you see carriages hurtling in your direction and feathers fluttering on women's Parisian hats; there you make your way through a dense crowd of Georgians dressed in dark-blue *chokhas* (capes) with long folding sleeves, you bump into Tatars with shaven napes, Ossetians bearing daggers tucked into their belts, Imeretians wearing flat pancakes on their head instead of caps, women picturesquely swathed in white chadors. Here there is little by way of greenery; there gardens surround you on all sides. Here you find yourself in a town from the Russian provinces (*gubernskii gorod*), with stone houses, mostly two-storied, each situated at a respectful distance from the next; there each home seems to thrust itself unceremoniously upon its neighbor, its cage-like upper chambers peeping out from behind compact windowless ground floors occupied by shops, taverns, Tatar coffeehouses and so forth. Here there is a sense of space; there it is cramped and crowded, and yet in this crampedness everything willy-nilly draws your attention, especially if you are visiting Georgia for the first time. In all honesty I say to you that if I were a painter I would prefer the old city. (47–48)

30 While the letter is unsigned, all evidence points to Polonskii's authorship: the date of its publication, the location of its addressee, the similarity of its content to other known works by Polonskii, not to mention Polonskii's recent appointment to the editorial board of the newspaper itself.

Here the urban everyday unfolds in *both* its bewildering and its potentially overwhelming diversity *and* as two contrasting itineraries which bifurcate difference along a rigidly observed East/West civilizational divide. The reader is invited to savor the exoticism of oriental color and the encroachment of modern urban planning, all at once. Polonskii's dual itinerary corresponds precisely to Count Vorontsov's most significant initiative, the construction of a "European" Tiflis, in contradistinction to the city's residual "Asiatic" – essentially Persian – core but adjacent to it. Count Vorontsov's urban renewal saw the construction of Golovinskii Prospect (now Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi's main artery), a rectilinear boulevard boasting the Viceroy's palace and other government buildings, Georgia's first proscenium theater, and the suburb of Sololaki, a European-style residential neighborhood designed for the ascendant Armenian merchant class. How might Vorontsov's transformation of Tiflis compare to the nearly contemporaneous restructuring of Paris by Baron von Hausmann, a process that, along with the reverberations of the failed revolutions of 1848, arguably provoked the earliest articulations of aesthetic modernism in France?[31] If *Haussmannisation* was intended to facilitate the free circulation of industrial and commercial capital and bring about the eventual *embourgeoisement* of Paris, then Count Vorontsov was inspired by the very different legacy of eighteenth-century Petrine modernization, which reinforced the autocratic state as the primary agent of economic development and cultural progress (Jersild 2002: 63).[32] The restructuring of Tiflis had the precise goal of spatially encoding Russia's civilizing mission in its Eurasian peripheries, reasserting imperial authority even as it offered local elites the beguiling benefits of cultural enlightenment and political cooptation (Brower 1990: 9).[33] Vorontsovian urbanism is palpable both in the changes made to the built environment and in the Parisian fashions of the local Russian élite: tellingly, the *paletot* is not the garment of a bohemian flâneur but a strolling government bureaucrat.

31 On the political economy of Baron Haussmann's urban renovation of Paris, see Harvey 1985; on its relationship to literature and the arts, see Benjamin 1986; Clark 1984.

32 Cf. Bater 1984: "In Russia . . . the development of cities and life within them was very much under the thumb of officialdom from at least the middle of the 17th century until well into the 19th . . . In an absolute autocracy, in which the city performed the administrative service on behalf of the state, where the mercantile function was purposely restricted, and where an industrial function with the specter of a seething lumpenproletariat was perceived as a real threat to social and political stability, city growth was something to be closely monitored and to be limited in impact" (135).

33 For a case study of urban transformation in British India, see Oldenburg 1984. For a wider discussion of the relationship between colonialism, modernity, architectural modernism, and urban space, see Avermaete, Karakayali, and von Osten 2010.

To grasp the implications of this colonial and statist variant of the urban everyday for the physiology as a travelling genre, let us accompany Iakov Polonskii on one final walk through Tiflis. Arguably the finest literary accomplishment of his Georgian sojourn, Polonskii's "A Stroll through Tiflis" ("Progulka po Tiflisu," 1846, published 1849) elaborates what is surely the earliest sustained literary account of Tiflis street life to be found in the modern era.[34] It would also appear to be at the furthest remove conceivable, formally speaking, from the physiological sketch: a lyric epistle in irregular iambic verse dedicated to Lev Sergeevich Pushkin, the younger brother of Russia's most celebrated poet. The choice of the friendly epistle as a genre, as well as of its recipient, betrays a carefully cultivated tension between the old and the new. As in the case of Polonskii's "Letter to Moscow," an older – sentimental-romantic – form must be replenished with newer – "physiological" – content, even as this newer content must be tested by a crisis of vision characteristic of the romantic lyric. "A Stroll through Tiflis" begins unexpectedly: the poet-flâneur, we soon discover, is no déclassé bohemian, but a government official, caught between the rhythms of work and leisure on a typical day in the chancellery of Count Vorontsov. This scenario, however implausible in Louis Huart's Paris, is entirely in keeping with Russian literary and social history: the only existing Russian precedent for a physiology in verse was Nikolai Nekrasov's "Civil Servant," published just a year earlier.

The poem's opening lines elaborate the routine tedium of office work and the prosaic discomforts of Tiflis's ferocious summer heat: both will be finally mitigated by the cooling onset of evening, permitting a delineation of the poem's central itinerary. Even as the poem outlines the lyric hero's path, its spatial clarity is held in check by a repeated confounding of perspective. Elapsing as it does during the fleeting moments of sunset, the poem struggles

34 Russian flâneurie has its own literary history, linked closely to the European, yet diverging from it. We may note Konstantin Batiushkov's "Progulka po Moskve" (1811–12, but published only in 1869; in *Sochineniia* [1934]), and "Progulka v Akademiiu khudozhestv" (1814; in *Opyty v stikhakh i proze* [1977]). Equally relevant are the journalistic study of manners and the feuilleton: see, for example, Faddei Bulgarin's early piece ""Progulka po trotuaru Nevskogo prospekta" (1824; in *Peterburgskie ocherki F.V. Bulgarina* [2010b]). Polonskii's poem would appear to be a generic crossing of the sentimental friendly epistle as practiced by Batiushkov and the later journalistic traditions of the feuilleton and the physiology. The Russified French term *flanër* first makes its appearance in the works of the young Dostoevsky: see, for example, his announcement of the publication of the comic almanac *Zuboskal* in the journal *Otechestvennye zapiski* (November 1845: 43).

to vouchsafe its superabundance of visual detail against the constant threat of ineffability, as the picturesque panorama of Tiflis's street life yields to what the poet Keats once called "negative capability."[35] This movement, from the sensory abundance of the visible world to a crisis of visibility which precipitates a return to the self, is the poem's essential dialectic. Let us briefly examine both moments in turn:

> Where shall I go? I walk across Mukhran
> Bridge along the ravine, and straight to the Armenian
> Bazaar – there the populace,
> Awake since dawn, whether for work, for need or out of indolence
> Seeks cooling shade on the narrow pavement,
> Walking, sleeping, working, drinking. –
> A unique populace! I like to idle here –
> to silently observe – and silently admire
> Paintings such as I of course
> never before did see. (Polonskii 1933b: 39)

The poet's chosen itinerary can – *mutatis mutandis* – be followed to this very day, if one can account for the dizzying change in toponyms over the centuries: after crossing the Mtkvari (Kura) River over Mukhran (now Baratashvili) Bridge to Mukhran Street (now Baratashvili Avenue) – the western edge of the historical city once marked by a fortified wall that ran along the Sololaki ravine (mostly filled in or demolished beginning in the 1820s) – the poet swerves southward toward the Armenian Bazaar, today K'ot'e Apkhazi (and until recently Leselidze) Street, the Old City's primary thoroughfare leading from Yerevan (now Freedom) Square to the Maidan, for centuries Tiflis's principal trading center (now Vakhtang Gorgasali Square). The poet's itinerary, then, first traces part of the old city's vanishing premodern boundaries and then pierces it along its primary economic artery and surrounding alleyways through to its pulsating heart and oldest historical site. Both these spatial strategies – delimitation and penetration – resonate in the context of the Vorontsov era: the construction of European Tiflis, actively pursued during Polonskii's sojourn, required the *physical delimitation* of its "Asiatic" neighborhoods as well as their partial *aesthetic recuperation*, to be contrasted with the modernizing architectural vision of the Russian viceroy. The poet's stroll through the Armenian Bazaar and its neighboring alleyways constitutes the poem's descriptive core: caravanserais and hole-in-the-wall stores, tradesmen

35 By "negative capability" Keats meant the ability to dwell in "uncertainty, mysteries and doubt without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (1899: 276). See John Keats's letter to George and Thomas Keats, December 22, 1817.

and artisans, camels, donkeys, and buffaloes, everyone and everything is subject to the poet's seemingly exhaustive physiology of ethnic identities, market activities, and traded goods from as far afield as "Persia and the banks of the Moscow River" (40). Yet if the Parisian flâneur confronts the circulation of industrial commodities within a city increasingly subsumed by exchange value, then Polonskii collides with the world of the oriental bazaar. This world, easily misread as *couleur locale* but representing what is, in fact, a still robust mode of artisanal production, ultimately defeats the classifying impulse of the physiologist. If Tiflis is "a real find for a painter," then this is one painting Polonskii "cannot complete." In one of two key moments of visual vertigo, the agglomeration of types – "donkeys, / carpets, soldiers, buffaloes, Georgians, / coolies, balconies, Ossetians, / [and] Tatars" – begins to "blur together" in the poet's eyes, just as the built environment – "this mass of buildings, / this entire mishmash of wreckage without legend / of homes built perhaps of older ruins / Of gardens all enmeshed in vines of grape" – similarly defies delineation. "Drawing Tiflis," the poet concludes, "lies beyond my reach" (42, 44).

These concluding lines enact what is, in fact, a dialectic of two distinct aesthetic modes – the mundanely *picturesque* and the ineffably *sublime* – which together constitute the poem's visual parameters. Emerging as an aesthetic category in the eighteenth century, the picturesque embraced irregularity, intricacy, sudden variation, and ruggedness of contour as painterly values.[36] Positioned ideally in-between the beguiling harmony of the Beautiful and the terrifying formlessness of the Sublime, the Picturesque sought to "*frame* roughness and variety," thereby both celebrating and containing nature's diverse bounty (Punter 1994: 223, emphasis added). Yet if the picturesque, adapted by the physiology to the specifics of urban rather than natural landscape, constitutes Polonskii's positively embraced goal, then the poem's moments of stark crisis, in which typological distinctions collapse into indeterminacy, also suggest the limits of the picturesque gaze. In contrast to Russia's romantic poets, for whom the sublime was the positive marker of a predominantly alpine landscape, here the sublime marks the negative limits of the poet's power to visually capture the *city*. This was Iakov Polonskii's no small achievement as the first Russian writer to have lived in Tiflis for a sustained period of time.

36 See Gilpin 1792: 3–33. Entering Russia in the late eighteenth century via horticultural manuals, the picturesque achieved popularity in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars as a means of envisioning a properly national landscape that escaped the limitations of the pastoral idyll as well as the extremes of the sublime: see Fusso 1993: 129–40; and Ely 2002: 59–86.

How, then, did Polonskii's Caucasian corpus modify the achievements of the *Physiology of Petersburg*? Petersburg's progressive intelligentsia had sought to liberate representations of the urban everyday from state control; by contrast Polonskii's Georgian texts overtly acknowledge the workings, at once colonizing and modernizing, of the Russian state. Formally, Polonskii's texts further radicalize a tendency, already noted in the works of Nekrasov, toward genre hybridization. His grafting of the physiology onto older romantic genres is neither purely parodic nor purely nostalgic. It resurrects the figure, foreclosed by the Parisian physiology, of an embodied, culturally marked, and socially alienated authorial subject. This subject is at once an agent of the imperial state and the bearer of aesthetic sensibility: as such he is symptomatic of a historically determined configuration between the state, the literary and print market, and the dynamics of urban modernization in the Russian periphery.

What then might we conclude from the physiology's journey from Paris to St. Petersburg and thence to Tiflis? I began by suggesting that world literary studies appear caught between three competing conceptual models: an abstract globalism, generally mapped as a hierarchical system of center/periphery relations, an insistence upon cultural specificity, understood in local or regional terms, or as material circuits of exchange, generally traced via transnational networks. The first model assumes a unified but uneven planetary scale, divided by national boundaries but linked by market exchange. The second and third celebrate the circulation and proliferation of differences, often understood as the abundance of irreducible local particularities. How, then, does my story relate to these two models? This chapter's external trajectory confirms the European provenance of the physiology as a genre, tracing its movement from the Parisian center to the Russian metropole, and subsequently from the Russian metropole to the Caucasian periphery. Such a trajectory would appear to readily conform to the diffusionist model of world literature most recently associated with Franco Moretti, for whom it is precisely the "compromise between the foreign and the local" which elevates the experience of peripheral and semi-peripheral literatures – as against the Anglo-French core – to exemplary typicality (2003: 58).

The center/periphery model, which posits the origins of literary modernity in Europe, is clearly pertinent to the spread of many of the ascendant genres of the modern era, including the physiology. At the same time, I would argue that the center/periphery model needs to be complemented by greater attention to the trans/regional and the local as defining levels of geographic scale in the realm of cultural production. A genre such as the physiology, which draws on local ambiences as its primary material, is

singularly useful in this regard. To what extent do the formal features or the local content of the physiology reflect a singular and externally imposed socio-spatial logic such as the one suggested by Moretti? The physiologies of Paris and St. Petersburg sought to represent local urbanity for a metropolitan but democratizing public situated in a dramatically distinct set of relations to the market, the state, and the public sphere. The French *physiologie* celebrated or satirized petty-bourgeois taste in a Paris increasingly marked by the circulation of commodities and private capital, while the Russian *fiziologiia*, as practiced by the progressive intelligentsia, was arguably the expression of a search for urban forms and practices that would serve as the basis for an incipient non-bourgeois public sphere. Polonskii's Caucasian corpus performed a different function again: to represent colonial difference to the metropolitan Russian reader, but also to convey the limits of typological perception. The writer acknowledges his role as a state functionary but conveys a burgeoning visual realm beyond the imperial state, expressed as the triumph as well as the crisis of the picturesque.

The social life of circulating genres thus points to their often-discrepant role in different literary systems, and to the distinct formal and ideological solutions they propose within regional or local contexts. Only a trans-scalar analysis, moving between multiple spatial levels – city, nation, and empire – allows us to honor what humanists partly misread as cultural specificity without sacrificing the global perspective offered by such models as world-systems theory. In this regard, the physiology serves as a privileged case study of traveling genres. Its transnational circulation between different cities and distinct literary systems revealed both the mutability of genres within a given literary field and fundamental transformations at work in the urban everyday. Neither was simply the work of culture, or of literary history narrowly understood. Rather it was the product of a complex configuration of forces, in which the form-giving power of literary genre countered the centripetal force of the state and the circulatory mechanisms of the market by reflecting to their reading public the uneven experience of the urban everyday.

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37

Imaginative Geographies in the Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters

MUHSIN AL-MUSAWI

It is the purpose of this chapter to place literary geography, especially its "imaginative" site in a world republic of letters with the medieval Islamic region as its domain of exploration and reflection. As I argued elsewhere (al-Musawi 2015), the period between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries witnessed an active circulation, perpetuation, and dissemination of knowledge across the Islamic lands, with Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Aleppo, Isfahan, Samarkand, Marv, and many other epicenters as sites of production and exchange. A culture industry emerged that involved authors, librarians, copyists, binders, booksellers, and peddlers. Authorship itself shows other dynamics of annotation, commentary, marginalia, and agonistics that create in the end a wide cultural sphere. This multiplication of authorship imprints a pluralist stamp on many medieval writings that distinguish the period as a basin of transaction and interaction which are basic to world literature and culture. Tens of these writings in geography, mathematics, medicine, chemistry, philosophy, and literature found their way to Europe and other parts of the world (Schwab 1984; Toomer 1996).

As a seemingly marginal textual space secured by authors within the folds of their books, imaginative geography is a philological and literary practice that conveys overt and covert beliefs, inclinations, dispositions, and controversies. It provides sites of transaction and opposition that take the discussion beyond regional and ethnic or religious particularities. In other words, it places the reader in a medieval world literature. As such, the marginal note assumes great significance in relation to the medieval Islamic republic of letters because of its immediate relevance to knowledge construction. More than an authorial intrusion, its presence in a relatively less tight book production than ours resonates with an ongoing dialogue not only among

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texts but also among writers, commentators, redactors, bibliophiles, and readers. Hence, this exploration of imaginative geographies (Said 1977, 1978),[1] especially their metanarratives, rests on similar premises as *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters* arguments that place a massive literary production in a tabulated space of knowledge construction (al-Musawi 2015). As shown in book production throughout the period in question, authors and their redactors or reviewers tend to organize knowledge under some divisions and subdivisions. They also keep an eye on probable reaction or criticism. They either claim antecedent authority on their side, as in the Egyptian Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's (d. 1333) *The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*, or declare the unique and unprecedented nature of their contribution.[2] With this understanding of worldwide cultural formations in mind, the present exploration is theoretically situated in knowledge production, epistemic shifts, and the application of worldwide means and modes of cultural capital. Hence it tracks genealogical structures, antecedent authorities, and contemporaneous geographical production in a polymorphic worldwide system. Antecedent authority often interferes here and reformulates an individual's understanding and perception within a textual or reported tradition. In this geographical space, there is therefore the real, the fantastic, and the strange that is inherent in everyday life. More than its physical cartographic form, this imaginative geography is a textual space for desires and fears, an archive where power, knowledge, and space reflect on each other and produce a verbal construct. In Western representations, however, this cultural artifact displaces or substantiates material realities.

Imaginative geographies reflect in many ways on the makeup of a worldwide cultural exchange. Although produced as an abstract grid, these textual constructs operate as powerful mechanisms in the makeup of an imaginary, which for orientalism turns into truism. The strange and the fantastic usually receive a substantial share in Eurocentric tradition as one way of differentiating self and culture in terms of a presumed colonialist supremacy, its rationality, color, and might in power, knowledge, and space (al-Musawi 1981). In this triangulation, as analyzed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978), texts create their own realities, and hence imaginative geography emerges as an orientalist and colonial representation par excellence. Anour Abd al Malik's "Orientalism in Crisis" (Abdel-Malek 1963)

1 David N. Livingstone argues that "geography was the science of imperialism *par excellence*" because "exploration, topographic and social survey, cartographic representation, and regional inventory . . . were entirely suited to the colonial project" (1992: 160). Also Blunt and Wills 2000.

2 See, for example, al-Ḥillī 1992: 6; and in al-Musawi 2015: 343.

addresses this issue as a problematic primarily rooted in representation; an interpretation that Edward Said gives impetus, currency, close theorization, and much wider circulation in postcolonial theory. Said's seminal analysis focuses on Europe in particular. Exercised on a vast textual space, this interrogative interlocutory method is more concerned with the desire and motivation for exploration, knowledge, and control. But does this apply wholly or in part to premodern and classical Arabic production of a large geographical constellation that is no less daunting than its literary counterpart? Does compartmentalization show forth in the imaginative geographies of the age of conquest, the Roman, the Persian, and the Islamic for example? Does it apply to ancient forms of conquest or the later ones as led by Islamic armies in the ʿAbbāsid period up to the fall of Baghdad in 1258? Or to the Mongol invasions of a large swathe including Iran, Iraq, and Syria? Were these ages of conquest predicated on similar motivations and representations as the colonial? But this is only part of an inquiry that should be present in further discussions of imaginative geographies. Said's readings happen to develop a neo-historicist analysis of a rich colonial legacy of representations that often exoticize or alternately dehumanize its Other. The case with virtual space diverges from that line and raises further questions that play on plurality, heterogeneity, and open traffic in images that could rely on that old legacy, albeit with counter readings from geographical fringes.

As theorem, Said's reading is centered on geographical partitioning and compartmentalization whereby Europe differentiates itself textually and hence representationally from its Others (al-Musawi 2018). Said rightly draws attention even to an early medieval tradition that specifies Islam as Other, as in Dante's texts and contexts that convey a practice nurtured and fed by the church in the struggle with its Islamic neighbors. A Manichean mechanism has been sustaining itself for long on a legacy that predates post-Renaissance colonial venture and vaults over the Andalusian symbiosis. It takes shape in a massive crusading politico-economic drive that lasted, but never died, for more than 300 years. Even when there were exceptional cases, deviational and dissenting voices that questioned this mechanism, they were swept away by an overwhelming discriminatory representation (Toomer 1996).[3]

These imaginative geographies operate through silhouettes and images, but also through philological itemizations, such as those found in travelers' accounts and impressions. In this geographical space, there is therefore the

3 Conversely, in the Andalusian wars with attacking armies, there recur labels that reference these as *Naṣārā* (literally: Christians, but meaning the military campaigns).

real, the fantastic, and the strange that is inherent in everyday life. The strange and the fantastic usually receive a substantial share in Eurocentric tradition as one way of differentiating self and culture in terms of a presumed colonialist supremacy, its rationality, color, and might (al-Musawi 1981). An interesting comparative framework for geography, idea, power, and knowledge can be drawn as follows in two significant texts of everlasting impact on thought and politics worldwide, one by the tenth-century prominent geographer Shams al-Dīn al-Muqaddasī (b. Jerusalem, 945–991) and another by the fourteenth-century Venetian geographer and statesman Marino Sanudo (d. 1338). Both leave us a prolegomenon, a metanarrative with a focus on method and purpose. Al-Muqaddasī's is more concerned with the representation of the "best" map of the world with its divisions and human geographical history, as based in part on a firsthand knowledge, alongside ancient and contemporary authority. The maps of the *Best Division for the Knowledge of the Provinces* are more concerned with available and known Islamic centers, where Greater Syria or *Bilad al-Sham* receives praise for being the abode or destination of prophets and messengers of God, and for a number of geographic qualities. On the other hand, Marino Sanudo's *Opus Terrae Sanctae* (1321; 1260–1338; *The Book of the Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross* [2011]), is concerned with a crusade to recapture Jerusalem, but his argument and maps strive to convince the papal authority of the need and feasibility of a crusade through a siege and invasion of Egypt first. Napoleon's venture in Egypt (1798 –1801) would follow four centuries later. In Sanudo, maps and cartographies are extensively made use of to provide a roadmap, literally and metaphorically. Its geographical, historical, military, and literary material is driven by a certain zealous energy and passion. Sanudo lays emphasis on Jerusalem as the centripetal/centrifugal center for a post-crusade siege of Islam, presumably in collaboration with the Mongols. Reconstruction in both books by al-Muqaddasī and Sanudo is in keeping with the model explained in each prolegomenon. The reasoning for the endeavor emphasizes the thin line between fact and fiction, documentation and paraphernalia, textual authority and firsthand knowledge. In other words, each author's voice sets the stage for imaginative geographies. A difference of perspective and purpose takes the form of a search for knowledge as an Islamic prerogative on one hand and as a justification for a crusade on the other. Both show some literary skill, and al-Muqaddasī is often singled out as a model in literary geography. Classical and premodern Arabic Islamic philological geography is of paramount significance in this corpus not only because philologists often use lands, nature,

and space to explicate their philological inquiry but also because this inquiry necessarily entails a discursive metanarrative.

Hence, the application of imaginative geography here should not be categorically conflated with medieval crusading, nor should it be confused with Eurocentric representations of Islam and its territory that have already been exposed and laid bare by Edward Said. While representations do happen to operate as motives and paradigms in travelogues and geographical mappings, the medieval Islamic metanarrative in these imaginative geographies offers us significant departures, and also material for comparison. For instance, the writings of the Muslim age of conquest, i.e., seventh to early tenth century, were more explanatory and descriptive than differential. Apart from topography and mapping, their reliance on antecedent authority, especially Indo-Persian and Greek sources, limits the scope of differentiation to matters of belief that often get blurred by theoretical borrowing. This borrowing, lamented by Krachkovski (1987), is often at the expense of firsthand experience. Nevertheless, the Atlas of Islam, a term coined by Krachkovski (1987), has its center in the abode of Islam as separate from neighboring belligerent territories of unbelief (*dār al-ḥarb*), which, if not monotheistic, are often described as either infidels or undeserving of readers' attention. As originated in early Islamic jurisdiction (for more on this see Ahmad 2008), this differentiation is to pass through a number of transformations in line with the development of empires and states and their foreign relations. First, the rich Islamic geographical production often relies, or claims to rely, on a firsthand experience of travel, practice, and observation. Second, it also makes substantial use of whatever is available from Greek and Indo-Persian sources, alongside antecedent and contemporaneous writings and discussions. Third, it includes imaginative reconstructions that may take the first two components as a starting point. Philological inquiry on the one hand and a hagiographic tradition on the other are no less present in some accounts that build on some sense of real or imagined difference. In other words, diversity of sources and reliance on early or contemporary traditions minimize but do not negate the divide between Islamic territories and belligerent territory. Authorial commentaries and digressions provide informative insights that generate, in turn, further conversation. Hence, metanarrative is the vehicle through which the narrator's differentiating voice can be heard. Its centrality to geographical exploration and hence to social science has drawn more attention to literary geography not only as a container of knowledge but also as site of difference, rupture, and discontinuity. As the domain for archeological study and excavation, this sphere

resonates with Michel Foucault's reading of archeology and archive, and is integral to a poly-system of the medieval Islamic republic of letters (1971: 129).[4]

Moreover, there is need to go beyond the basics of geographical inquiry to engage with the literary side of this production, a move that Brosseau (1995) and Sharp (2000) call for "regarding the need for geographers to afford greater consideration to the formative role of literary language and literary form in the production of spatial representations" (Tavares and Le Bel 2008: 46). As Brosseau notes, the particular discursive norms and conventions that inform the production of literary texts "contribute to the creation of original and distinctive geographies" (Tavares and Le Bel 2008: 46). He explains this practice as "another way of writing and producing meaning, of interpreting or representing social diversity and contingency in space, which theories and academic discursivity cannot always accommodate" (Tavares and Le Bel 2008: 46, cited in Brosseau 1995: 106).

The conversation among texts and names supervised and directed by the metanarrator necessarily entails coverage of a vast space beyond borders and limits. It is up to the metanarrator as the master of the show to explain techniques, methods, and interaction with others. Although not strictly applicable to my use throughout, Prince's definition of metanarrative may well be applied to mean "a narrative referring to itself and to those elements by which it is constituted and communicated, a narrative discussing itself, a Self-Reflexive Narrative, [that] is metanarrative" (Prince 2003). In an elaboration on Ansgar Nünning's take on metanarrative, Monika Fludernik sees metanarrative as an inclusive moniker that accommodates explicatory comments. I go further, however, to argue that what's at stake here is larger than metafiction and its approximate literary metanarrative. The focus here must be as large as geographical imagination, an imagination that unfolds as a series of intersubjective, subjectified, objectified, and/or codified formations.[5] This is why I use two significant metaphors that emerge and grow from a lived experience where desert and urban space, nomadic and sedentary cultures meet and interact to produce broad conceits like the Kurd's *jirāb* (turtleneck leather bag) in the *Thousand and One Nights*, and the ever-magnificent littérateur,

4 For more on archive; see Foucault 1971: 5, 9, 139, and p.152, on archaeology.

5 Fludernik 2003: 16: "The objects of metanarrative comment . . . can then be situated *in* the story (commentary on the histoire), on the discourse (commentary on the act of narrating), and on the paratextual level (commentary on the frame, title of a novel), on the intertextual and intermedial level (comment on the novel, aesthetics, on the novel and society, on poets and writers, etc.)."

poet, politician, and statesman of Granada Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb's (d.) *Nufāḍat al-jirāb* (literally: Travel Bag Morsels and Remains to Console Abroad). The contents of both turn out to be treasure-like, endless, and rich.

In its inclusiveness of multiple approaches, visions, and genealogies, Islamic geography in Arabic has produced a massive number of imaginative geographies, whereby authors have their observations, reports, and readings mediated not only through and in relation to a specific or unidentified homeland, habitat, or abode but also through certain literary conventions which polymaths and historians, operating as kinds of geographers, either accept or rewrite. At this intersection, we come across a rich repository that traverses bounds and limits and helps in the formation of constellations that in turn impact other genealogies. One example is Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī's (1179–1229) *Dictionary of Countries*, which borrows from antecedent authority but has continued to supply lexicons with material. This dictionary of nations and lands is not immune to imaginative reconstructions. Written and compiled by this widely traveled and well-read author and bibliophile, the compendium plays down the mention of marvels but leaves good space for metanarrative. This last self-reflexive, self-explanatory, and lively discourse enables Yāqūt's dictionary to be a mine for our purpose, as it contains but also critiques other writers' informing strategies. One can take this partial reliance on antecedent and contemporary authority as a historical index and inventory of preceding endeavors. It also lays the groundwork for future imaginative geographies. More importantly, it shows in various ways the venues in which the production of space unfolds. In its voluminous size, it attempts to be faithful to its title, a dictionary of countries and nations as known then. Moreover, it has become ever since a source for philologists, grammarians, and poets.

Philological Geography

Grammarians and philologists have an early role in these imaginative geographies, not only in books on meteorology but also in books with geographical habitats and locations as in their writings on Arabia. This mention of Arabia and its environs and habitats in the early ʿAbbāsid dynastic rule invites and validates an intensive linguistic or broad philological, excavation. A lexicon, a repertoire of poetry, topography, and an archive emerge that set the stage for future tabulation of knowledge. Along with Abū al-Mundhir Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (died 819/821, Al-Kūfah), there are al-Aṣmaʿī (216/831), Saʿdān ibn Mubārak (d. 835), ibn Laghdhat al-Aṣfānī (282/890), and

the illiterate Bedouin ʿArrām b. al-Aṣbagh, etc. (Krachkovski 1987). Hence, Kratchkovski's quote from Yāqūt is pertinent. The latter classifies philologists with regional geographical interest into two groups that often follow al-Naḍr bin Shumayl (d. 203–4/818–20), a student of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (d. 791); and Abū ʿUbayda (223/837) in organizing entries in terms of species and designations. So there are books with special focus on lived space, and famed cities and habitations, and others whose attention is predicated on the vast space of deserts, steppes, plains, and Bedouin abodes. They make up "the hierarchy of litterateurs (*ṭabaqāt ahl al-adab*)."[6] But both significant authors cannot be read apart from al-Kalbī, whose encyclopedic mind and hold on evidence are incomparable.[7] If we go along with Yāqūt, then "whenever solid scholars, ʿUlamāʾ, differed on some Arab matter, his say is argumentatively the strongest, but he is nevertheless unfairly overlooked."[8] In these rich Islamic ninth and tenth centuries – which will serve as the stepping stone for further inquiry into the metanarrative of the republic of letters – there is always an ancestral authority, contemporaneous at times, that incites argumentation, self-validation, and self-reflexivity. If there is no such ancestry, then the author claims uniqueness. In all cases, authors argue their indebtedness in order to endow their production with extra value.

To resume the question that starts this intervention: Do Anour Abd al-Malik's and Said's theorems apply to old empires, specifically the Arab Islamic? Edward Said and Abd al-Malik share the same understanding of the empowered and empowering rhetoric of empire, its growth as a monolithic body politic that derives its self-legitimating enunciation from differentiation. This cannot apply to Arab-Islamic discursive space, as manifested in metanarratives. There is in these a qualitative geographical assessment of regions, people, and cultures, a turn that makes use of geographical dictionaries but with a claim to world mapping.[9] Furthermore, authored material on routes and realms and on nations and countries gives only partial attention to differentiation between Islam and its others. Its obligation toward patrons, state, or readers is to provide knowledge of lands and people, a knowledge that rarely overlooks issues of estrangement, alienation, and loneliness. Moreover, such issues as caliphal authority, affiliation with homelands,

6 Krachkovski 1987: 136. Cited from Al-Ḥamawī n.d., Vol. I: 6–7. See also *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Dār Ṣādir) for the list of those who make up the class of littérateurs, I: 12. Also Sezgin 1987: 19–20.

7 Full name: Abū al-Mundhir Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Saʿib al-Kalbī (d. 204 AH/819 AD).

8 Yāqūt ibn-ᶜAbdullah al-Rūmī al-Ḥamawī, I: 11: 158. See Krachkovski 1987: 158.

9 This shows more in Idrīsī, Yāqūt, ibn al-Wardi, and many others. Ibn Faḍlān's account of the Vikings, appears in Yāqūt's.

close acquaintance with basic or casual geographical writings, and relative reliance on Greek and Persian sources distance sustained differentiation and Othering. The initiation and further solidification of philological inquiry impose a direction on the discourse of space, a direction that is bound to minimize and even underplay a discriminatory discourse. Labels like *bilād al-Arab* and *bilād al-ʿajam (*Arab regions and non-Arab regions) tend to replace early Islamic differentiations of war and peace, giving way to the naming of regions through the use of analogies, including those of birds and of the human body, and which are not necessarily very benevolent to certain Arab border lands (Zayde Antrim 2012: 96). These aviary or anatomical descriptions coexist with geometrical or cosmographic maps. Terms like the "navel of the earth," or the attraction of the universe, or its "mother" sum up a hierarchical geographical mapping of regions and climes, and they open up a wide range of metaphors, conceits, and tropes that punctuate imaginative geography and its metanarrative. An overarching analogy displaces, at times, physical description and enables writers as geographers to speak of a world in terms of direction like east and west or in terms of distance. Philological practices are noticeably present throughout, but these lack consistency to form a constant, and they invite a careful mapping themselves to perceive the rise or fluctuation and deflection of imaginative geographies. Nevertheless, a solid base was already laid by philological geographers in the late eighth and ninth centuries, a base that takes lands and people as venues for philological inquiry. Despite decentralization, later periods demonstrate invigorating worldwide dynamics. Peripatetic or stationary, nomadic or sedentary, polymaths in particular, but also all varieties of littérateurs, leave us a rich corpus of imaginative geographies. Self-intervention, self-reflexivity, and authorial commentary provide a thread to build up knowledge genealogies. These employ and deploy Arabic for specific reasons while negotiating formations through a vast discursive space that claims universality even when specifically focusing on a region, a habitat, a social geography, a meteorology or a horoscopy, or an aberrational or occasional occurrence.

Along with its main body of descriptive geographies, this discursive space is widely inclusive of poetry, historical accounts, memoirs, sketches, graffiti, gossip, and rumor. In this textual space, routes, venues, habitats, and little geographies multiply to account for certain phenomena. But, as befitting an Islamic republic of letters, there is an active conversation not only among travelers, geographers, philologists, poets, polymaths, and ordinary people who constitute the "ʿāmmah" but also among texts, modes, movements, discoveries, and commentaries.

Medieval Islamic imaginative geographies demonstrate these as venues in and through which geographers, writers, poets, compilers, and statesmen participate in the makeup of a discourse of space. This argument cannot stand smoothly on its own without passing through some interrogation of incentives, or dynamic causes. To go along with Benedict Anderson, for instance, "the modal journey is the pilgrimage" because, and relying on Victor Turner, it is "a meaning-creating experience" (Anderson 1991: 53). Such a surmise helps to explain, for example, the centrality of Muḥammad al-al-Azraqī's (d. 834) *Akhbār Makka* (Chronicles of the City of Mecca the Glorious) to later narratives of space, but it cannot work as a paradigm for ventures and explorations with different motivations. Moreover, it does not explain other ventures in a large universe that lured travelers like Abū Dulaf al-Khazrajī al-Yunbu'ī to reach China, or to drive the Andalusian jurist Sa'd al-Khayr b. Muḥammad b. Sahl al-Andalusī al-Anṣārī (d. 541/1146–47) to go there and get so enamored by that experience to be nicknamed the Chinese. Nor does it explain ibn Faḍlān's journey and report of the Slavs when the caliphate was waning. Ibn Baṭṭūṭā (d. 1377) would come later, adding to the complexity of navigation in a vast space. Metanarrative may well serve to explain multiple motivations in a massive discourse of space.

Although possibly scanty and marginal at times, the narrator's reflections on his/her art, in terms of selection, listening, dictating, inscribing, abridging, and expanding, are part and parcel of one's means, techniques, and material. It is there that engagements with predecessors and contemporaries take place. Al-Azraqī's Chronicles of the City of Mecca emerges among the earliest foundational hierarchies of place like the pre-Islamic odes topoi,[10]as a source to be relied on or raided. This is the textual space that paradoxically grows and expands in relation to its appropriation by others. Each antecedent text feeds another in a long narrative chain. Ibn Muḥammad Abū al-Qāsim Ḥawqal's (d. 988) use of Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhim ibn Muḥammad al-Fārisī al-Iṣṭakhrī (d. 957) and ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 868), and the enormous borrowing from Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 934) and ibn Rustah's appropriation of ibn Ḥawqal and others are among a number of instances that beg further explanation in terms other than "plagiarism" as understood in Western scholarship. As long as the new author acknowledges a predecessor or a contemporary, the matter falls within a cultural redistribution of assets and is thus an effort to participate in the makeup of geographical knowledge. The matter gets out of hand sometimes, as in the case of Abū Bakr

10 Zayde Antrim 2012: notes to pp. 63–67, n. 165, nn. 9–10.

Muḥammad bin Mūsā al-Ḥāzimī (d. 1188) whom Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1229) blamed for stealing and claiming authorship of a book titled *Asmaʾ al-Biqāʿ* (Names of Regions) by Naṣr bin ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Iskandarī al-Naḥwī (the grammarian; d. 520/1126) (Yāqūt I: 11).[11] Medieval compendiums provide a different understanding of textual conversation, intertextuality, or raids. Their priority rests on a comprehensive compilation that makes use of every available source. A strategy of dispersion of assets dispenses with specific citations and presents knowledge as a shared field. It is rare to find a compiler claiming originality in matter though not in manner.[12] Al-Nuwayrī made extensive use of many, but especially of al-Waṭwāṭ's (d. 718/1318) *Mabāhij al-Fikar* (Delightful Concepts and the Paths to Precepts). More important in its wide scope and also metanarrative is *al-Masālik al-Abṣār wa Mamālik al-Amṣār* (Ways of Perception Concerning the Most Populous/Urbanite Provinces) by Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Faḍl Allah al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349). He explains scope, purpose, and method in these terms: "I shall describe what each kingdom of the sultanate comprises as a whole and not in parts, and of the city in which the king resides ... or where it is necessary to make some mention of this, and the majority of the kingdoms in all their humility, and most of the customs of their inhabitants." The scope is limited to the land of Muslims: "I did not endeavour to visit the entire world, save for the great kingdoms," and hence "this work does not extend into the lands of the infidel" (cited in Sayyid 2011).

Engagement with antecedent authority to the extent of duplication was often widespread. Zayn al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn al-Muẓaffar Ibn al-Wardī's (d. 1349) was the immediate contemporary of Sanudo. His *Kharīdat al-ʿAjāʾib wa farīdat al-gharāʾib* (The Pearl of Wonders and the Uniqueness of Strange Things) strived to be a geographical container of information for a map of the world. While accommodating some material from his contemporary the Egyptian Najm ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdān ibn Shabīb al-Ḥanbalī (ca. 1332), entitled *Jāmiʿ al-Funūn wa-Salwat al-Maḥzūn* (Bencheneb 1936: 428), ibn al-Wardī mentions his reliance on al-Masʿūdī, al-Ṭūsī, and others, but skipping Yāqūt, whose Dictionary of Countries could be the main source (Jwaideh 1987: 19, note 4). Apart from claiming indebtedness, ibn al-Wardī's map, Atlas of the World, signifies a taxonomic nomenclatural departure that divides the world as al-mashriq (east) and al-maghrib (west), which only partly remains inclusive of Arab and non-Arab differentiation. Prepared in the late Mamluk

11 See more by Sayyid 2011. See also Muhanna 2018.
12 See, for example, how al-Nuwayrī defines his project (2016: 3).

era, its Arab / non-Arab demarcation gets thinner and thinner. In other words, it is in line with al-Idrīsī (d. 560 / 1165), in his sojourn in Sicily's Roger II court, and it consolidates a visible turn in geographical thinking that is no longer tied to war and peace categories. Geographers' vision gets informed and influenced by the politics of their immediate space, a point which often invites metanarrative to explain and justify.

In these instances, metanarrative gets more self-reflexive, a self-conscious undertaking that gains in significance for explaining a textual experience. On the theoretical level, this self-reflexivity is an attempt not only to ensure a place in a genealogy of grammarians, litterateurs, geographers, astrologers, astronomers, meteorologists, historians, and polymaths but also to acquaint others with their unique contributions, a point which Yāqūt (d. 1229) demonstrates and, before him, such illustrious figures as Aḥmad Ibn Abū Yaʿqūb al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 897) and al-Muqaddasī (d. 991). Metanarrative as such situates itself among texts and names to derive empowerment so as to defuse or abnegate marginality in relation to official discourse, often the authoritarian one, which is usually the compromised production between the chancery secretary or scribe and the ruler.

I take metanarrative as significantly poised to enable us to see the role of the narrator as a self-conscious entrepreneur in a vast territory – or merely in a symbolic endeavor – that invites or invokes memory or belonging. This is better shown in al-Idīsī's (d. 1165) *Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fi ikhtirāq al-āfāq* (The Book of Pleasant Journeys into Faraway Lands; i.e., World Geographies),[13] Yāqūt's (Dictionary of Nations; i.e., Countries), and in similar universal geographies. In these, there are instances where space gets blurred in Gog and Magug and Waq Waq fantastic anecdotes, hence belying presumed substantiality and tangibility (Zadeh 2017). Alongside this, there is, however, a poetics laid down by poets, critics, and compilers that deem place and its toponomy as an ontological or conversely subjective instance in which metanarrative presents an overflow of emotions. Such are poetries of departure, travel, solitude, exile, nostalgia, memory, and mourning of people and of cities. There is a massive configuration of poetics that brings the temporal and the spatial in conversation with basic human intimations, emotions,

13 Known in the West as *Geographus Nubiensis*, the Nubian geographer. Born in Morocco and educated in Cordoba, he worked in Sicily, the Palermo court of the Norman king Roger II, after whom his world geography was called *Kitab Rujjar* (Book of Roger) in 1154; its full Arabic title is *Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtiraq al-afaq* (Entertainment for One Desiring to Travel Far). *Encyclopedia of Geography*.

incantations, benedictions, tribulations, and concerns (Zayde Antrim 2012: notes 18–29).

While demarcation between the territorial and the universal is often called on as an analytic base for a discourse of space, attention to metanarrative may shift categories of analysis and show forth other dimensions of writing that escape master designs and properties. Whenever the voice of the author, as actor and writer, vindicates a profession and explains methods and strategies of selection, choice, and endeavor in the production of space, there is often something there that invites attention or scrutiny. This undertaking can end up with some interrogation of the associations between territory and identity, their reclamation in pan-nationalist and nationalist discourse or their crumbling under wars, invasions, globalization, enforced market economy, factionalism, or compartmentalization. In all cases, what matters in the discourse of place, old and new, is the voice of the author, his/her authorial claims and justifications, and whatever of that comes out as metanarrative proper.

This textual space with its variegated narratives and poetries is where imaginative geography is at home, as one basic interdisciplinary formation that puts us face-to-face with representations and also with concrete experience that brings us to the old formations of cultural inclusiveness. At this point, one agrees only to some extent with Benedict Anderson that "[Much] the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities" (1983: 133). The early vernaculars that were subsumed under the strident Quraysh dialect turned into areas of philological inquiry in the shadow of an Arabic that derived impetus from pre-Islamic odes and other literary manifestations before becoming the most celebrated Qurʾānic Arabic. Henceforth, Arabic is a field for grammarians, philologists, poets, administrators, and instructors. Probably one century after the advent of Islam, Arabic helped to create a vast and vigorous competitive domain where *adab* outgrows the behavioral, instructional, edifying, and even *ẓarif* (refinement) of its meaning to engage more with the practice of writing.[14] At this juncture *adab* unfurls as a comprehensive enterprise, albeit with a distinctive personal voice.[15] It is not coincidental that the term *ʿilm al-adab* (literally: the science of belletristic writing; meaning: the human sciences; or knowledge) was introduced in

14 Quoted with some editorial changes from Makdisi 1990: 93. *Adab* was commonly used to refer to fine writing, refined behavior, command of a literary and cultural repertoire. See Heinrichs 1995: 119–20; also Bonebakker 1990: 16–30.

15 See Antrim's intelligent reading (2012: 12–16).

Arabic instead of the customary broad use of *adab* (belletristic writing) at the height of interest in geographical exploration and thought. Both the author of the influential *Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm*, Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sakkākī (a native of Khwarizm, d. 1229), and Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr (d. 1239) use the term *ʿilm al-adab*. In the case of ibn al-Athīr, he refers this use to the Virtuous Judge and wazir of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Baysānī (d. 596/1200).[16] Already addressed in Abū al-Ḥusayn Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Sulaimān b. Wahb al-Kātib (d. after 334/946) in his rigorous exploration of rhetoric and eloquence, *Al-Burhān fī wujūh al-bayān* (Demonstrating the Modes of Eloquent Expression), *adab* amounts to systematized humanities, a systematization that coincides with al-Muqaddasī's *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm* ("the best division for the knowledge of the provinces"). On the basis of M. J. de Goeje's Classic Edition (1877), the latter's work is described as "the first work of its kind to be accepted as a form of literature."[17] Centuries later, we find anthologists and compilers like al-Nuwayrī who include geographical locales and also space and habitat in massive compendiums (Muhanna 2018). Almost no compendium in the medieval period, not even the ones dealing specifically with poetry and poetics, lacks this aspect or metanarrative components. Systematization in information and method, as evident in a number of works and constellations like that of the Brethren of Purity, is not new as ninth-century writings and rationalist debates demonstrate (for more see al-Musawi 2015), but the second half of the tenth century witnesses a canonization of texts as debates in philology and translation show. The *maqāmāt* with or against ninth-century prominent names like al-Jāḥiẓ fall within this active climate of ideas that allows us to speak of a zenith in the institutionalization of Arabic in knowledge construction. In geography proper, the ensuing intertextual debate with or against other geographers or historians, as well as the massive reliance on other texts, generates a climate of ideas, an episteme. Reliance or differentiation cannot take place in a vacuum. There must be some expectations and needs that generate discussion and help to initiate modes of production. As argued in *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters*, this climate cannot be dissociated from a massive philological inquiry that is not limited to lexicographic explorations. Its multiple manifestations appear in the debates with translators, the growth of the *faḍāʾil* genre, and the multiplication of anthologies that rarely lack a section on geography and other disciplines. In these as in every other form of production, metanarrative and hence

16 Ibn al-Athīr n.d.: 54–55.
17 See product description of "*Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm* by al-Muqaddasī".

Arabic signifies an authorial presence. Litterateurs from all over the Islamic lands became active participants in this institutionalization even when they were not necessarily functionaries of a state, kingdom, or sultanate. Arabic was, in the tenth century onwards, a sought-after skill in the market of highly competitive cultural production, despite the waning caliphate and the emergence of many other kingdoms and petty states.

It is only imperative therefore to provide a map of reading to account for the worldwide institutionalization of Arabic throughout the ʿAbbāsid and postclassical (pre-modern) periods. Institutionalization is not only a statist prerogative but also, and more pertinently, the voicing of a writer's purpose and method, whether the writer is a geographer, a traveler, a historian, or scribe and poet. Geographies dedicated to patrons, rhetorical or otherwise, suggest the significance of this statist dimension, however; yet this same dedicatory matter can also operate as a metanarrative strategy to justify one's method and simultaneously magnify one's endeavor and achievement. Enforced and perpetuated by a desire to be at the center of discourse, this geographical writing along with its authorial self-reflexive explanations aspires to refinement or to be claimed as such. The cultural diversity and richness of the tenth-century cultural diversity and thickness shows a rising interest in geography by such prominent figures as Muqaddasī, Qudāmah ibn Jaʿfar in his *Kitāb al-Kharāj* (Land Taxation), and al-Masᶜūdī (d.) in the *Meadows of Gold*, ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī's (d.), *Kitāb akhbār al-buldān* (The Book of Regions; authored: 903), ibn Rustah's (d.) Treatise on precious objects, ʿUbaydallah ibn ʿAbdallah Ibn Khurradadhbih or Ibn Khordadbeh (820 – 911/912) Book on Routes and Kingdoms, ibn Ḥawqal (The Face of the Earth), and before them the prominent Aḥmad ibn Abū Yaʿqūb al-Yaʿqūbī's (d. 897/8) *The Book of Countries*, Muḥ. B. Mūsā al-Khawārzmī's (236/850) Depiction of the Earth, Suḥrāb's Marvels of the Seven climes to the end of habitation (MS. London, Brit.Mus., Add. 23379), and certainly al-Jāḥiẓ's The Book of Homelands and Countries, and the Book of Information of Regions and Wonders of Countries (not extant) and his short but very significant The Book of Insight Into Commerce (Kitāb al-Tabaṣṣur bi al-Tijārah) (al-Jãhiz 2012). Others include Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān (Levi and Sala 2009), and before them astronomers left a strong stamp on geographical imagination like Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Kathīr al-Farghānī (870?),[18] and in meteorology Abū Ḥanifah al-Dainūrī (d. 895). In philological geography there is the

18 Alfraganus; b. in Farghanah, Uzbekistan, associated with the ʿAbbāsid court in Baghdad, and died in Egypt. For his impact on Medieval Europe, see Sarton 1947–48: 567. Also Krachkovski 1987: 100.

overwhelming presence of ibn al-Kalbī (d. 820). The medieval shift to compilations and compendiums prepared for by the Andalusian Abū ʻUbaydah al-Bakrī (d. 1094), and Muḥammad al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048, Ghazni, Afghanistan) still retains some antecedent authority theorizations, but its tendency is to choose and organize imaginative geography in a tight selective space to distinguish one's effort.

Throughout, and though with unevenness in prose, Arabic appears not only as a highly developed language but also as a growing enterprise highly accommodating of the languages of the street, the marketplace, and also the *bādiyah* (deserts, steppes, and wilderness) with all the intricacies that have enabled – and benefited from – intercultural and transcultural proximities. At this crossroads, the imaginative geographer leaves a signature or a specific explanation to be remembered with. Along with Yāqūt and a large number of premodern Muslim geographers, historians, and polymaths, al-Muqaddasī has already drawn readers into a map of the world that basically revolves around Islamic centers but is normative enough to claim universal proportions. Elevated prose endows this mapping with authoritative power that derives from a thick classical literary heritage. This prose retains a link between an antecedent authority of philological geographers and the newly emerging generation since the mid-tenth century. It also signifies the centrality of this prose to chancery, as the institution running state affairs throughout the Islamic lands in their relations worldwide. Chancery as an institution is a small geographical space with an enormous outreach. As an institution, chancery is a battleground, a prestigious site, and an arena for cultural production, which includes manuals for trainees. It is a geographical space with the widest internal and external obligations and functions; but it is also the place where *katib*, scribe or secretary, proclaims a self-justification of a plan, a method, and expertise. If we look for analogies of equivalence among small or even tiny spaces or things, then the chancery resonates with the implications of the vast information, travels, dealings, and narratives we find in the *kurd's jirāb* and ibn al-Khaṭīb's *Travel Bag*.

Even when presumably focusing on only one specific geographical question, the self-reflexive, authorial, and self-conscious discursive voice does not shy away from occasional explorations in cartography, demography, cosmography, astronomy, astrology, horoscopy, and, significantly, philological geography. More inclusive than history for accommodating natural, economic, and social life, geography is a field for philologists to expand their inquiry. A field of massive and vast comparative explorations takes form in a worldwide atlas and scriptorium. Alongside polymaths and

geographers proper, philologists often reference their own writings. This self-reflexivity is more than reflections on one's art. It often includes commentaries on other writers. The art amounts to no less than a reconstitution of a worldview that navigates its itineraries among the observed, the reported, and the imagined.

The production of space remains substantially present throughout these, but the metanarrator as the enunciating producer of textual space assumes great significance simply because the self-conscious author mobilizes skills, readings, dictations, interviews, hearsay, and observations to come up with a version that culminates a career. In Lefebvre's terms: "Every space is already in place before the appearance in it of its actors; these actors are collective as well as individual subjects inasmuch as the individuals are always members of groups or classes seeking to appropriate the space in question" (1984: 57). In other words, as we speak of metapoesis, metahistory, metafiction, where space shows forth as a paramount dynamic, we also speak of a metanarrative whereby the subject of enunciation stands in command of poly-system transactions in a republic of letters.

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38

The Anthology as the Canon of World Literature

ANKHI MUKHERJEE

How does world literature, arguably the readily globalizable counterpart of national literatures, position itself in relation to the Western canon of literature, and who does this positioning for it? Is it a sub-canon, a counter-canon, a hyper-canon? In her introduction to *Reading World Literature*, Sarah Lawall points out that the generalized concept of world literature can lead to absolute interpretations:

> The geographic scope of international literature educates citizens to function (or "compete") globally, while the canon itself constitutes an idealised reference point, an authoritative sample of human experience and a guide for those learning to know themselves and the world. (2010: 2)

World literature reduced to a list of masterpieces, however, does not provide the best definition of its concept or potential, Lawall argues. Goethe's coinage in 1827 envisioned an intellectual exchange and mutual recognition between readers rather than tangible particulars: "Insofar as the academic practice of world literature is bound by lists or canons, it undercuts the intention of achieving worldly knowledge and personal growth" (3). Yet, especially for the beginner in the field, it is impossible to imagine world literary studies without the book list or the anthology. Working from Leah Price's definition of the anthology as not only a "product of writing" but a "trace of reading," which functions as a device "to spare, or prevent, its own readers from reading all the editor did," this chapter outlines the ways in which the canon of world literature is constructed and consecrated through the anthology piece that has been crucial to the easy portability of "world thoughts" (2). It conceptualizes, in the process, the role of the post-authorial editor arbitrating a work's translation into the world literary corpus. Finally, it examines this mode of selective representation in the context of what Harold Bloom derisively called "the school of resentment," the race, gender, and class interests

historically trampled in monumentalizing gestures leading to imaginary unities, such as literary canons or anthologies.

The English word "canon" is derived from the Greek *kanon*, which translates to "rule," "rod," or "measuring stick." David Ruhnken first used the word in 1768 for a selective list of writings, a usage that, Rudolph Pfeiffer notes, was influenced by biblical tradition, not the antique use of the term (quoted in Harris 1991: 110). In subsequent references, the elective and normative meanings of the term have become increasingly interchangeable: as Wendell V. Harris points out, "selections suggest norms, and norms suggest an appeal to some sort of authority" (110). The ecclesiastical use of "canon" for definitive books of the Bible reinforces the regulative charge of the term, though the literary canon, arguably, is considerably more flexible than its biblical counterpart. "The desire to have a canon, more or less unchanging, and to protect it against the charges of inauthenticity or low value . . . is an aspect of the necessary conservatism of a learned institution," Frank Kermode observes (1979: 77). And, canonicity involves not merely a work's admission into an elite club, but its induction into ongoing critical dialogue and contestations of literary value. The canon is a set of texts whose value and readability have borne the test of time: the determination of canonicity is also the very modality that validates ways of reading and critique in the present moment as well as in relation to the *longue durée* of literary history.

The anthology occupies an important mediating position between the canon and the curriculum. If the syllabus is the "pedagogical abstract" of the imaginary list that is the literary canon, as Guillory puts it, the anthology, although not as dynamic as the canon nor as instrumental as the curriculum, is a constructed form that resembles both parties as it relates one to the other (1993: 31). "I don't actually think either anthology is indecisive about canonicity," David Damrosch states in "The Mirror and the Window: Reflections on Anthology Construction" (2001: 212). He is here listing the relative merits of the six-volume *Longman Anthology of British Literature* (2000), edited by himself, and the seventh edition of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature,* edited by M. H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt, with reference to a precursor such as Frank Kermode's 1973 *Oxford Anthology of English Literature*. If the *Oxford Anthology* claims in its Preface to provide students "with a selective canon of the entire range of English literature from the beginnings to recent times," the *Longman* and the new *Norton*, Damrosch adds, "recognise the oxymoronic quality of a 'selective canon' and the ever-expanding variousness of 'the entire range of English Literature'" (2001: 212).

It is, in other words, a canon formation not only aware of its "fractal approach to selection and arrangement" but presenting the same as a modality of opening up the canon (212).

Leah Price's influential work on the rise of the anthology sees it as a "genre in its own right" although literary history has treated it as a vehicle and not an autotelic literary artifact (2003: 3). The anthology shapes not only literary culture but also the history of literary criticism, marking, as it does, the salience of the critical editor's role in collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing contents. A mass-produced commodity, anthologies nevertheless "make the individual construction of literary meaning a part of public literary culture" (Benedict 2003: 251). Barbara Benedict sees the anthology incarnating a paradox of reading: readers are inducted into the community and commonality it creates even as they are liberated for a private understanding and enjoyment of the texts. The best anthologies are both representative and distinctive, "offering readers the simultaneous opportunity for intensive reading of selected extracts and extensive reading across the diversity of material portrayed" (Kelleher 2011: 448). The anthology is the formal manifestation of complex processes by which pedagogy is systematized in a consensual framework, yet its ideological operations are unobtrusive enough to not warrant critical investigations. It sheds valuable light on the form and content of the survey course and the introductory course, its editorial criteria reflecting not only current scholarly trends of comparison and juxtaposition, the temporal and spatial organization of a group of related texts, but new techniques of standardization (of spelling, grammar, and style). However, as Christine Chaney points out, anthologies like the Norton are "very widely used yet very little theorized" (2001: 192).

Price relates the anthology to the bowdlerized edition, the expurgated text, the abridgement, and the commonplace book to argue that extraction "underwrites the history of criticism as we know it" (2003: 2). Abridgement, skimming, or skipping a text are viable modes of critical engagement and anthologies illustrate the era's taste, voracity, as well as its boredom threshold. Anthologies, Price states, "are more than a referendum. They determine not simply who gets published or what gets read, but who reads, and how" (3). Works with multiple authors and editors, anthologies defer and displace authorship and, as Barbara Benedict has argued, they paradoxically advertise both "difference and similarity": "Anthologies are more than one work, at the same time as they also are one work" (2003: 242, 232).

Why Anthologize the World?

The Longman Anthology of World Literature has six constituent parts, varying in length from 600 to over 600 pages: *The Ancient World* (Volume A); *The Medieval Era* (Volume B); *The Early Modern Period* (Volume C); *The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Volume D); *The Nineteenth Century* (Volume E); *The Twentieth Century* (Volume F). Additionally, there are two compilations which combine volumes A, B, C, and D, E, and F, respectively. On the Pearson website (www.pearson.com), the product information under each volume leads you to the full list of the series, tellingly organized under the URL "Damrosch World." Reviewing David Damrosch's prodigious output on the world literary canon, in particular his authored or edited works *How to Read World Literature* (2009a), *Teaching World Literature* (2009b), and the above-mentioned *Longman Anthology of World Literature*, John M. Kopper cites Borges's "The Aleph," a short story about the magisterial book project of one of the characters, which covers entire hectares of the Australian landscape. "Damrosch has more than created a classroom Australia. He has produced a pedagogy," Kopper observes (2010: 399). He points out that Damrosch's definition of world literature is based on accessibility and translatability more than aesthetic merit: world literature, as Damrosch influentially stated in *What Is World Literature?* (2003), is not a set canon but a mode of circulation, a mode of reading that is a form of detached engagement.

> His language suggests some form of transnational, salutary cultural shock: a moment of defamiliarization that forces readers to reenter their own world through another door . . . Damrosch considers world literature to consist of texts that appeal enough to our knowledge to draw us into their own textual modes of expression yet that at the same time remain transcendentally resistant. (Kopper 2010: 403)

The list of editors, drawn from exclusively North American universities (or related institutions), is below:

David Damrosch, Harvard University
David L. Pike, American University
April Alliston, Princeton University
Marshall Brown, University of Washington
Sabry Hafez, University of London
Djelal Kadir, Pennsylvania State University
Sheldon Pollock, Columbia University

Bruce Robbins, Columbia University
Haruo Shirane, Columbia University
Jane Tylus, New York University
Pauline Yu, American Council of Learned Societies

The description for each volume, including the compilations, reads:

> The editors of the anthology have sought to find economical ways to place texts within their cultural contexts, and have selected and grouped our materials in ways intended to foster connections and conversations across the anthology, between eras as well as regions.
>
> The anthology includes epic, lyric poetry, drama, and prose narrative, with many works in their entirety. Classic major authors are presented together with more recently recovered voices as the editors seek to suggest something of the full literary dialogue of each region and period. Engaging introductions, scholarly annotations, regional maps, pronunciation guides, and illustrations provide a supportive editorial setting. An accompanying Instructor's Manual written by the editors offers practical suggestions for the classroom.
>
> ("Longman Anthology")

Volume F of the *Longman Anthology of World Literature* entitled *The Twentieth Century* provides rich material for addressing the key aims of the undertaking: "fostering connections and conversations . . . between eras as well as regions" and representing literature ranging from "major authors" to "more recently recovered voices." Long history and simultaneity, the universal and the particular, the specificity of print culture in what Paulson calls "the ecology of communication" (2001: 150). The price of the volume is very low for its length, though high for a student of the humanities. On the other hand, as Kopper points out in his review of the six volumes of the Longman anthology, "buying volumes selectively means selecting a period," and the anthologies of world literature are more ecumenically chosen than the scope of the (predominantly West-centered) syllabi require (2010: 401).

Each volume begins with an introduction and a timeline. The selections are efficiently organized into "Perspectives" and subdivided into "Resonances": the first grouping is engineered to provide cultural context for major works, illuminating key issues of the time they represent, while the second, which appears in the individual author selections, offers sources for a specific text or its afterlife in a different time, place, or writing culture. Perspectives for Volume F include: The Art of the Manifesto; Modernist Memory; Cosmopolitan Exiles; Poetry after Poetry; Echoes of War; the *One Thousand and One Nights* in the Twentieth Century; Gendered Spaces; Postcolonial Conditions; Literature,

Technology, and Media. The "Resonances" section, to give a few examples, pairs "The Proclamation of the Irish Republic" with W. B. Yeats's "Easter 1916," Sir Henry Morton Stanley's "Address to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce" (excerpted) with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the Preface to the *Nigger of the Narcissus*, and Osip Mandelstam's "To A.A.A. (Akhmatova)" (trans. Bernard Meares) with Anna Akhmatova's selected poetry. A feature titled "Crosscurrents" at the end of each Perspectives section connects it to related sections in the same volume as well as other volumes of the anthologies. The editors explain how "Crosscurrents" loosens the focused grouping of the "Perspectives" sections to facilitate the movement and translation of themes and issues "across cultures and across time" (F: xxi).

The editors, David Damrosch and David L. Pike, provide a working definition of world literature justifying the selections:

> Works of world literature engage in a double conversation: with their cultures of origin and with the varied contexts into which they travel away from home. To look broadly at world literature is therefore to see patterns of difference as well as points of contact and commonality. The world's disparate traditions have developed very distinct kinds of literature, even very different ideas as to what should be called and what is most commonly shared among the world's cultures. (F: xx)

Implicit, then, in the worlding of a work of literature is its ability to engage with its immediate context, its cultural conversations, speech acts, literature, and music, as well as those happening elsewhere or in the time to come. Virgil's *Eclogues* (42–39 BC) provide a rich example of this doubling, interlaced as their pastoral themes and landscapes are with politics of the court and philosophical allusions. The deceptive simplicity of the ancient pastoral masks the complex aesthetic negotiations of its form and style with the "grandiloquent speech of epic and tragedy and the lowly conversational tone of comedy," observes Gregson Davis in his introduction to the translation of *Eclogues* by Len Krisak (2011: xvii). In the bucolic tradition founded by the Hellenistic Greek poet Theocritus, the cowherd (and goatherd and shepherd) – the adjective "bucolic" is derived from the Greek word for cowherd – is both herdsman and idealized singer. The vowel notes in the *Eclogues* mime reed pipes, while the musicality of its overall effect creates a "delicate balance between the pedestrian and the formal, the mundane and the sublime," states Davis (xviii).

The key difference between the "double conversation" initiated by the canonical counterpart I have cited and that by the anthology piece, however, is in the engineered nature of the latter. Not trusting the work in itself to

make its transferability across time and space progressively evident, the *Longman Anthology* rescues it from stand-alone literary and critical contexts in a broad sweep. To "look broadly at world literature," as the manifesto says, for to look too closely, to be staggered thereafter by the difficulties posed by signal, non-identical, and equivocal uses of language, style, form, visual culture would be detrimental for this kind of an anthologizing drive (F: xx). "I have been left uneasy in the face of the entrepreneurial, bulimic drive to anthologize and curricularize the world's cultural resources, as evinced in projects sponsored by some proponents of World Literature," Emily Apter famously states in *Against World Literature*, a work which sets out to modify the "translatability assumption" of ambitious and synthetic anthologies of and companions to world literature with what she delineates as the politics of untranslatability (2013: 3):

> Perhaps it would be more accurate to understand the Untranslatable, not as pure difference in opposition to the always translatable (rightly suspect as just another non-coeval form of the romantic Absolute, or fetish of the Other, or myth of hermeneutic inaccessibility) but as a linguistic form of creative failure with homeopathic uses. (20)

Apter uses the example of Tolstoy to illustrate this. Tolstoy, by opening *War and Peace* in French, justified the novel's non-provincialism and paved the way for its entry into the canon of *Weltliteratur*. Tolstoy's use of French is, however, characterized by a marked reluctance to readily translate: long letters in French, quotations from French thinkers, official French dispatches, some translated (or mis-translated) and the others not. Quoting Richard Pevear, co-translator of the 2007 Knopf English translation of the novel, Apter argues that the untranslated and untranslatable performs a "metafunction" in the novel, "demonstrating, with a certain realism, how language-savvy aristocratic society lives in a world in which blurred comprehension and linguistic subterfuge are the norm" and posing a heterogeneity that rents the narrative continuum of *War and Peace* (2013: 17). In his review of Apter's *Against World Literature,* David Damrosch called the criticism of world literature leveled by Apter "sometimes stark" (2014: 505). Arguing that Apter led the very disciplinary and institutional initiatives which would be instrumental in the opening up of comparative literature to world literary studies, Damrosch went on to allege that her critique of the field she helped create does not do justice to recent scholarship in world literature. These are works – and he cites Mads Rosendahl Thomsen's *Mapping World Literature* (2008), Ursula Heise's *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental*

Imagination of the Global (2008), Djelal Kadir's *Memos from the Beseiged City* (2010), and others – which highlight the complexities of translation, transmission, and reception Apter is seeking to restore to scholarship in world literature. Nor does Apter take into consideration the long-standing and ambitious publication projects related to world literature in Japan, China, South Korea, Estonia, Poland, or Portugal.

Damrosch's review of Apter is an exemplary instance of the reactive mode in which world literature has staked its territory in relation to postcolonial and comparative literature, translation studies, and literary criticism. Even after taking into account Apter's cautionary note against "an encapsulating model of literary comparatism that, in promoting an ethic of liberal inclusiveness or the formal structures of cultural similitude, often has the collateral effect of blunting political critique," and Damrosch's retort that being circumscribed in one's own "theoretical and cultural comfort zone" was as problematic as erring on the side of being too pluralistic and too ecumenical, however, two key questions remain unanswered (Apter 2013: 41; Damrosch 2014: 506). Why is it at all necessary or important to read Yeats or Akhmatova as world literature in the museumizing of best texts the anthology attempts? What is the sliding address to which these forced encapsulations of world are directed? It is to these that I will turn in the rest of this chapter, taking into consideration the intractable difficulties posed by cultural and linguistic translation, and the debatable and refutable logic of the selection of texts supposedly optimizing "patterns of difference as well as points of contact and commonality" in the corpus of not just English-language literature but all the globe's languages and literatures (*Longman*, F: xx).

Why World?

Volume F of the *Anthology of World Literature* addresses both concerns, however perfunctorily, in the preface. On the question of translation, it suggests that the circulation of world literature is in itself an exercise in cultural translation and that "one way to define works of world literature is that they are works that gain in translation":

> Some great texts remain so intimately tied to their point of origin that they never read well abroad; they may have an abiding importance at home, but don't play a role in the wider world. Other works, though, gain in resonance as they move out into the new contexts, new conjunctions. (xxiii)

The economy of the world literature anthology is such that while it self-designates as a convergent site for literary works which exceed themselves in

novel contexts and conjunctions, there is no room for further exegesis on the works which don't travel so well, their content deemed unfit for "the wider world." The use of "abroad" is mystifying in this articulation, and one suspects that, in the twenty-first century, it is another name for the US academy (just as it would have designated Europe in the twentieth). Scholars pondering the difficult negotiation of "point of origin" and "abroad" in the literary productions of an author such as Yeats, for example, duly anthologized in Volume F, have often referred to a famous passage from Yeats's *Memoirs* where he states the following: "literature discovers; it can never repeat. It is the attempt to repeat an emotion because it has been found effective which has made all politically provincial literature . . . so ineffective" (quoted in Donoghue 1988: 178). Yeats is commenting on a discussion he had had with Maud Gonne on literature and nationalism, and Donohue uses this insight to contemplate recurrent trends in the discussion on Northern Ireland in present-day discourse on Ireland. Gonne, the inspiration behind the incendiary Helen of Yeats's "No Second Troy," was, of course the paragon of beauty whose revolutionary zeal galvanised the youth nationalist movement. In this poem, Yeats allows himself to ask if nationalism is a destroyer, not guarantor of futurity.

> Why should I blame her that she filled my days
> With misery, or that she would of late
> Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
> Or hurled the little streets upon the great,
> Had they but courage equal to desire?
> What could have made her peaceful with a mind
> That nobleness made simple as a fire,
> With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
> That is not natural in an age like this,
> Being high and solitary and most stern?
> Why, what could she have done, being what she is?
> Was there another Troy for her to burn? (Finneran 1983: 91)

Whether or not "No Second Troy" is an exemplary work of world literature in its unmooring of itself from its point of origin, it evokes the Western canon, not simply Irish culture and politics, in its elaboration. In this, the "Helen" poems published in *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* ([1910] 1912) mark a significant break from the cultural nationalism ushered by the 1889 publication of *The Wanderings of Oisin* (Yeats 1892). A Shakespearean douzain, the poem evokes Greek antiquity to talk about a modern woman in modern Ireland. In "Classicism and Colonial Retrenchment in W. B. Yeats's 'No Second Troy',"

Martin McKinsey points out that the poem aligns itself to the epic tradition not just through classical allusion but in the way it yokes "private and public turmoil, the individual and the transhistorical" (2002: 176). He likens the poem's visual culture to Renaissance portraiture, the aristocratic beauty in the foreground, burning cities and angry mobs behind her. She could also be read as the object of Petrarchan courtly love poetry, a Petrarchism Yeats borrowed from the French poet Pierre Ronsard, whose *Sonnets pour Hélène* Yeats had already imitated in his poem "When You Are Old" (1891). McKinsey points out – as does Helen Vendler in *Our Secret Discipline: Yeats and Lyric Form* (2008) – that Yeats is keen to move away from the Shakespearean sonnet or douzain. Irishing the English form in relation to his Homeric inheritance, "Yeats found it expedient to recruit allies from the Continent when mounting his challenge to English cultural domination" (177).

An Irish Helen who is, however, not immediately relatable to Cathleen ni Houlihan or the Homeric original and resembles instead the Amazonian and austere ("high and solitary and most stern") French Hellen of Ronsard's depiction. McKinsey argues that Yeats's classicism is that of the ideal and imagined Ireland of the eighteenth century, one that Yeats had described in *Explorations* as "that one Irish century that escaped from darkness and confusion" (1962: 180). To parse the different facets of "No Second Troy," this is a poem that brings together Hellenism and contemporary Ireland, an urban radical and the eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish country estate (the "tightened bow" a sign of its hunting culture), the Irish aristocrat who will teach the Catholic masses "violent ways." Do all the contradictions and clashing imperatives constituting the lyric intensity of "No Second Troy" make it a work of world literature? The answer is no, if we abide by the guidelines of the anthology. Greece and Ireland do not come together in the poem to make it more than the sum of its Irish and Hellenic parts: Greece functions, instead, as a revenant of Ireland's pure (and tragically lost) potential. The comparison is one of "unlikeness," McKinsey states in his powerful reading of this poem:

> The Greek frame of "No Second Troy" – title, last line – serves to damn rather than to redeem, heightening the contrast between then and now, here and there, ideal and actual. In the peculiar reverse perspective of classicism, what should be the temporal background – modern Ireland – is dwarfed by its classical parallel, reduced to a Lilliputian world of "little" streets inhabited by knaves and dolts. (2002: 183)

This is a work that has an abiding importance at home and in the wider world where it is read today precisely because of its failure to repurpose the epic for Ireland, to connect Ireland with Europe, and sublimate its politics into myth "in an age like this."

Whose World?

The Preface to Volume F of the *Longman Anthology of World Literature* positions the editors as readers and teachers whose experience led them to believe that "established classics can best be understood when they're set in a varied literary landscape" (xxii). Alongside time-honoured classics and major selections, they present a "great array of shorter works" (xxii). "Nothing is included here, though, to simply make a point," they explain:

> whether world-renowned or recently rediscovered, these are compelling works to read. Throughout our work on this book, we've tried to be highly inclusive in principle and yet carefully selective in practice, avoiding tokenism and also its inverse, the piling up of an unmanageable array of heterogeneous material. If we've succeeded as we hope, the result will be coherent as well as capacious, substantive as well as stimulating. (xxii)

As has been carefully charted by Haun Saussy and others, the rise of world literature is related to the crisis of comparative literature, its dogged Eurocentrism and Eurochronology, and the depletion of language and area studies programs. With the resurgence of world literature, the scope of comparative literature is vastly enlarged and its methodologies ramified (from high theory). To rephrase Brian Doherty, one need no longer go to the German department to study Franz Kafka or the Asian studies department to pursue an interest in Lu Xun. With world literature, "boundaries dissolve, disciplinary strictures lose their force, and bases of comparison expand" (2014: 102). Karen Smith compares the present moment in world literary studies to "the period following World War II in the United States, when the convergence of world events with an influx of new students on the 1944 GI Bill accelerated the development of broad international survey courses and professional discussions of how and why to teach them" (2011: 586). If the postwar period of the late 1940s saw the rise of the "masterpiece" in translation, where international works were firmly embedded within US curricula, the 1980s witnessed a different phase of world literature in that the emergence of anglophone postcolonial literature led to clashes between Eurocentric and multicultural approaches. During the last third of the

twentieth century, world literature was typecast as foreign literature in translation and became entangled, Pizer observes, in "debates on core curricula, Western civilization, and 'Great Books'" (2006: 109). At the same time, Smith observes, it led to world literature anthology revisions which sought to include more non-Western literature. In the post-Cold War era, "the canon-based concept of world literature," as Smith aptly describes it, has given way to an idea of "world literature as a process," fluctuations rather than consolidations of (cross-) cultural and transnational identities (2011: 597).

With these fluctuations in mind, I turn now to "Chekov and Zulu," a short story from Salman Rushdie's 1994 collection *East, West* that is anthologized under "Postcolonial Conditions" in Volume F of the *Longman Anthology*.[1] The introduction to the piece alerts us that while the title may seem to link a classic European writer with an African tribalist, the names actually derive from two of the supporting characters in the cult television and movie series *Star Trek*. Yet the title is a veritable calling card of world literature. Appearing in the "EAST, WEST" section of the book (the other sections are titled "EAST" and "WEST," respectively), "Chekov and Zulu" holds out the promise of alternative cartographies and vocabularies of belonging (together). The short story links England and India, US cultural imperialism to Tolkien's Middle Earth, sources and translations, immigrants and aliens. In some aspects, it is a retelling of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, with its themes of passing and cultural cross-dressing. Chekov and Zulu are silly Doon School nicknames for a pair of Indian diplomats – "Intrepid diplonauts" – in London (F: 958). Translated men, they are, Chekov says, professional servants: "We do not lead, but we enable" (F: 958). At first, the two men perceive reality transversally through their own English education and acquired Englishness even as they call the erstwhile colonizers "burglars" and "culpables" (959). In the climactic moment, in the moment of movement from living organism to the debris of suicide bombing, one of them notes that "These Tamil revolutionists are not England-returned" (F: 966). The friendship comes under pressure when, after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards, Sikhs are massacred and the government demands inside information on Khalistan separatists based in England. Zulu, the Sikh security agent, disappears, surfacing with a list of names only to quit his job and repatriate to India. The fantasized reunion of the two parted friends, estranged from each other due to their different perceptions of an

1 "Do we now read South Asian literature only through a postcolonial lens, straightjacketing a tradition even as we 'emancipate' its texts by installing them in the curriculum of the West?" asks John. M. Kopper in his book review (2010: 404).

increasingly totalitarian and neocolonial state, is a trifling gain: Chekov has a vision of himself holding hands with his friend Zulu on the bridge of the starship *Enterprise* seconds before it is decimated by Klingons.

The plot of "Chekov and Zulu" is slight, but the story revels in its linguistic excess: one of the sneaky perks of cultural dislocation, it seems to say, is a doubled frame of reference, mix-ups and métissage. As such it captures a phenomenon not rare in writers from the erstwhile colonies where postcolonial identity dreams of its dematerialization in a world literary frame. The story resists such an emancipation despite its unmistakable extra-terrestrial ambitions: the saga of Chekov and Zulu's friendship unfolds on an international stage, but this does not exempt either from national tyrannies or globalism's imperialist rhetoric. For the fantasist in Chekov, the nicknames derived from the *Star Trek* franchise, a foreign import to both India and the UK, are the basis not just of elective affinities but a blood brotherhood. The more-pragmatic Zulu thinks Chekov is like the hobbits in *The Lord of the Rings* "who work and squabble and make merry and . . . have no fucking clue about the forces that threaten them, and those that save their tiny skins" (F: 960). The joke played by the short story is that neither boy had seen even one episode of the globally popular TV series, so foundational to their future and alternative identities, in school: "The whole thing was just a legend wafting its way from the US and UK" (F: 961).

Conclusion

Literature is a veritable Angelus Novus, the new angel of history who, to quote Walter Benjamin, "wants happiness" (interpret "want" as you will) (cited in Agamben 1999: 137). Benjamin had described this unique happiness as "the conflict in which lies the ecstasy of the unique, new, as yet unlived with that bliss of the 'once more,' the having again, the lived" (Agamben 1999: 138). For Benjamin, the forward press of history is paralleled by the angel blown backward. The anthology is a book which metrically and masterfully orchestrates the moving picture that is literature, this oscillation between motion and arrest: the circulation of literature in the spatial movement of commodities in global capitalism and through regimes of value *and* definitive moments of dwelling and stalling that define the literary experience, deep reading, thick reading, close reading, and slow reading (which, as Elaine Showalter has assured us, is not reading for the slow).

"The topics of the Longman prefaces explicitly justify a new canon, which the selections in turn embody," remarks Kopper. "But the topics are not

rationalized or defended" (2010: 403). While this assessment of the anthology as the canon of world literature remains ambivalent about its inscrutable value criteria and principles of selection, it sees in the field of world literature tremendous scope for the articulation of the public value of literature. Literature, of course, is indissociable from the question of language. I can tell you many stories of being stopped at checkpoints in the USA and UK where people have reacted with incredulity that a person of my description teaches English at Oxford. "*You* teach English to the English?" This jumbling of literature and spoken and lived global vernacular can be a productive confusion, and the study of English literature in an international frame, made increasingly possible by the non-parochial energies of world literatures in English, could help literary studies promote language studies as active cultural media, not simply looking at languages as ethnographic objects of study, and not simply focusing on the languages of what Edward Said identified as the "Latin Christian literatures" (1994: 45).

I would like to conclude with a mention of *Arrival*, Denis Villeneuve's 2016 sci-fi thriller that seems intent on refuting the male lead's – a theoretical physicist's – assertion that science, not language, is the cornerstone of civilization. *Arrival* tells the story of Louise Banks (Amy Adams), a top language specialist recruited by the US government after unidentified aliens known as Heptapods dock their crafts just above twelve global epicenters, including the United States. Louise spends much of the film trying to communicate with the mysterious and possibly threatening creatures, learning the Heptas' language and teaching them our own. To flesh out Banks's role, the producers relied heavily on the scholarship of Jessica Coon, an associate professor at McGill University, an expert on syntax and indigenous languages. I was very interested in what Coon said about the process of decoding logograms, the translational activity on which the movie pivots. "One of the big misconceptions about linguists is that we're just people who know and speak and translate languages," Coon said. "That's not what field workers – which is what Amy's character is – actually do. We're interested in the structural properties; we're interested in understanding what underlies them" (Zeitchik 2016). The movie confirms what world literature has known all along, that the hard-earned knowledge of linguistic relativity, the complex and often ruptured connection between languages, is a viable mode of human attachment. At its best, the anthology of world literature extends this insight to the citizens, aliens, and internal immigrants of English language and literature.

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39

Data Worlds: Patterns, Structures, Libraries

KATHERINE BODE

The emergence of world literary studies and the digital turn in literary studies share a seminal text in Franco Moretti's "Conjectures on World Literature." Since that article was published in 2000, the ongoing digitization of cultural collections and emergence of new computational methods of analysis have only increased the excitement of some, and concern of others, that digital research will become a major, even a dominant, trajectory in world literary studies. But the associated claim – by critics and proponents alike – that digital approaches represent a paradigmatic shift ignores important continuities between digital literary research and the non-digital scholarship that precedes and persists alongside it, including in world literary studies. Much of the traction that Moretti's "distant reading" has gained can be ascribed to such continuities, including in the conception of archives, attention to networks and patterns, and orientation to national and canonical frameworks. Pre-digital traditions, ideologies, and infrastructures also shape digital resources and methods in substantial and influential ways. Rather than breaking with literary traditions, the more pressing problem with digital literary studies might be its tendency to sustain past hierarchies and structures of knowledge, including those that have relegated non-Western literary cultures and communities to the margins of academic debate. Recognizing and interrogating this inheritance, an emerging group of digital projects are beginning to advance what Vanessa Smith describes as some key aims of world literary studies, including situating literature "within a vast transnational library," expanding "the canon of the literary properly to reflect global diversity," and offering new conceptual frameworks that "adjust our reading of the novel to world scale" (2016: 92).

As most readers of this collection will know, "distant reading" – a term central to digital humanities – began its life as a "new critical method" for world literary studies. In his "Conjectures" essay, Moretti rejected the

reliance of world literary studies on close reading, arguing that this method meant the field could only consider a small canon of literary works from a limited segment of the world literary system: from "Western Europe, and mostly revolving around the river Rhine . . . Not much more" (2000: 54). To solve this problem Moretti proposed that literary scholars look to "distance" as "*a condition of knowledge* . . . to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems" (57). These units were to be derived from the observations of scholars in multiple national fields, offering the basis for investigating a world literary system that, in Moretti's analysis, constituted an unequal relationship between core and periphery literary cultures. Moretti defends the loss of the text, in such investigations, as a necessary precondition to explore that world literary "system in its entirety" (57).

One thing that the "Conjectures" essay does not do is to advocate for computational or digital approaches to literature. This connection of "distant reading" to literary data, computational methods, and mass-digitized collections has instead emerged over time, in Moretti's subsequent delineations of the method. *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History*, his 2005 book, translates the observations of other scholars into literary data and creates a link between the resulting analyses and world-systems theories by arguing that the history of literature "cannot be understood by stitching together separate bits of knowledge about individual cases, because it *isn't* a sum of individual cases: it's a collective system, that should be grasped as such, as a whole" (4). His 2013 book *Distant Reading* foregrounds digital methods, such as computational text and network analysis, as well as the digitized bibliographies, libraries, and archives that are increasingly substantial components of the knowledge infrastructure for literary studies. Moretti highlights the importance of digital infrastructure in reforming literary studies by noting that, where the field has previously experienced "the rise of quantitative evidence . . . without producing lasting effects . . . this time is probably going to be different, because this time we have digital databases and automatic data retrieval" (212).

While many literary scholars have enthusiastically embraced the possibilities of "distant reading" (for example, Goodwin and Holbo 2011), others have rejected the approach. World literary studies scholars have been among the most prominent critics of Moretti's method, in both its non-digital and digital forms. Katie Trumpener proposes that "distant reading" "violate[s] the individuality" and aesthetic qualities of literary works (2009: 160). Arguing that world-systems theory equates "economic with cultural systems,"

Gayatri Spivak describes "distant reading" as replicating, in the scholarly arena, the core/periphery dynamics of that system by encouraging scholars at powerful, central sites, such as the United States, to amass and process close readings by "native informants" from predominantly non-anglophone literary cultures (2003: 108). As "distant reading" has become increasingly aligned with digital humanities, these earlier criticisms have been supplemented by claims that data-rich methods are unable to support new discoveries for literary studies and contribute to the corporatization of contemporary universities (Marche 2012; Kirsch 2014; Allington, Brouillette, and Columbia 2016).

Among the earliest critiques of digital approaches to comparative and world literary studies is Haun Saussy's lead essay to the 2004 report of the American Comparative Literature Association, on the discipline in the context of globalization. Saussy argues that literature and reading – closely and carefully in the original language – are fundamentally opposed to contemporary flows of information and the informationist discourse it introduces. As "relic[s] of an earlier, data-poor, low-bandwidth era of communications . . . when details mattered" (2004: 32), literature and reading "frustrate the economy of information in which more data and faster access is always better" and thus offer a form of "internal resistance" to "information's charms" (33). By contrast, the "world according to Google," though "vast (and getting vaster all the time, now that whole libraries are being scanned into its database) and instantly searchable all the way to its farthest recesses," offers a "flat" "intellectual landscape" (32). For Saussy, the digital context enables only "a positivist style of reading," one that limits us to asking questions "of preestablished categories narrowing down to preestablished subcategories" (33). What Saussy's chapter makes especially clear is how rejections of "distant reading" – whether as a critical or specifically a digital approach – consistently conceive of it as a fundamental break from earlier paradigms and practices.

Yet in important ways, Moretti's approach builds on and resonates with trajectories in non-digital research, including in world literary studies. The expansionist, informationist discourse that Saussy criticizes as an effect of digital technologies can be perceived in intellectual and political reconfigurations of the archive in the latter part of the twentieth century, well before Google became a company let alone a verb, and definitely prior to the widespread use of digital resources and methods for humanities research. The insight, by Marxist, feminist, and postcolonial studies from the 1960s, that literary scholarship had privileged certain voices, raised the profile of

archival research and ascribed moral authority to the practice of extending the canon by studying and teaching new, particularly working-class, women, and non-white, authors. New historicist scholarship refined and strengthened this focus on the archive in emphasizing the "textuality of history and the historicity of texts" (Montrose 1992: 410). The subtle shift in emphasis from incorporating new actors and voices into literary and other histories to also – or especially – reimagining the nature and scale of the archive was reinforced and progressed by historical research oriented to transnational spaces and dynamics. For instance, describing the emergence of New Imperial History in the 1980s, Tony Ballantyne highlights growing recognition of the mobility of colonial knowledge and how this motivated a shift in focus from "enclosed, static, and discrete" archives – typically limited to a particular place and time – to a transnational archive conceived as "the product of the constant circulation of information and the heavy intertextuality of many forms of knowledge" (2003: 113).

This conception of archives as extensive and interconnected sites of information flow – and the orientation it produces to phenomena such as networks and patterns – has been influential in non-digital as well as digital approaches to world literary studies. Although she criticizes Moretti's world-systems approach, Wai Chee Dimock conceives of American literature as a networked configuration: not "a discrete entity" but "a much more complex tangle of relations . . . a crisscrossing set of pathways, open-ended and ever multiplying, weaving in and out of other geographies, other languages and cultures" (2006: 3). Roland Greene perceives the network as the implicit frame of reference in world literary studies, citing as evidence for this claim the focus on "networks" rather than "works" in David Damrosch's as well as Moretti's writing (2004: 214). While networks attain an obvious, concrete form in the visualizations that feature in some of Moretti's experiments (for example, *Distant Reading* [2013: 213]), Greene argues that even in Damrosch's studies of individual works, conceptions of literary value and meaning have become inseparable from a systemic view of literature and its connection to an international or transnational archive. Both authors also use patterns in flows of information – or of literary works, people, or ideas – to discern the latent meaning of the networks comprising the world literary system. Accordingly, in *What Is World Literature?* (2003) Damrosch foregrounds patterns in the modes and effects of translation of individual works of world literature, while in "Patterns and Interpretation" (2017) Moretti does the same with respect to word frequencies derived from hundreds of literary works. Both critics and proponents of "distant reading" stress its departure

from non-digital approaches. Yet the impact of Moretti's arguments is attributable, at least in part, to the equivalent importance of extensive archives and the relationships and repetitions they bring into view in literary and historical scholarship in the latter twentieth century in general, not least of all in world literary studies.

While the turn to expansive archives might be a feature of both digital and non-digital scholarship, the capacity of digital methods to explore such archives in new ways, and specifically at new scales, is often taken to mean that digital approaches will inevitably challenge traditional – particularly national and canonical – approaches to literature. At least in the range of national literatures explored, some of Moretti's experiments achieve his stated aim that "distant reading" be "a thorn in the side, a permanent intellectual challenge to national literatures" (2000: 68). *Graphs, Maps, Trees* opens with the rise and fall of the novel across a range of national contexts, including Britain, Japan, Italy, Spain, Nigeria, Denmark, France, and India, and *Distant Reading* reprises an earlier investigation of the international movement of American films. Yet British novels are the focus of most of Moretti's "distant readings," including analyses of trends in gender and genre and of formal features of detective and village stories in *Graphs*, *Maps, Trees*, and in studies of novel titles and dramatic character relationships in *Distant Reading*. Even his work on multiple national contexts frequently reinforces national boundaries. As I have argued elsewhere, for instance, in discussing the rise of the novel in Britain, Japan, Italy, Spain, and Nigeria, Moretti assumes that readers in those nations read only novels by authors of the same nation (Bode 2017: 90). With some important exceptions discussed at the end of the chapter, digital literary studies echoes the national orientation of Moretti's scholarship, with most large-scale literary histories focusing on literary works by authors of individual, predominantly anglophone, nations, including America (Wilkens 2013, 2017), Australia (Bode 2012), England (Bamman, Underwood, and Smith 2014), and Germany (Erlin and Tatlock 2014).

The focus on canonical authors and texts is another area where the framing of digital scholarship is at odds with its practice. While the expanding digital archive is repeatedly described as standing in contrast to the literary canon, most digital editorial work concerns canonical – predominantly white, male, British or American – authors and their works, including William Blake (Eaves, Essick, and Viscomi 2020), Emily Dickinson (Morris 2012), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (McGann 2008), William Shakespeare (Mowat et al. n.d.), and Walt Whitman (Folsom and

Price n.d.). In Roopika Risam's words, "[s]ome of the most developed digital humanities work" is devoted to "preserve the writing of dead white men, specifically individuals unlikely to be forgotten in Anglophone literary history even if these projects did not exist" (2015). Although a number of early digital projects and collections focus on women's writing, including the Women Writers Project (1999–2016) and *The Orlando Project* (Brown, Clements, and Grundy n.d.), Shawna Ross argues that such work has declined as a proportion of digital humanities scholarship since the 2000s, with a concomitant rise in a gendered construction of the field that emphasizes "the coolness of one's tool, the bigness of one's data, or the goodness of one's intentions" (2018: 212). Many computational analyses of literature likewise consider canonical writers, including Jane Austen (Burrows 1987), Emily Dickinson (Plaisant et al. 2006), and again, Shakespeare (Hirsch and Craig 2008). And while many of Moretti's earlier experiments in "distant reading" reach beyond the so-called one percent of the canon, much of his recent work has a canonical emphasis. For instance, his investigation of dramatic character networks in *Distant Reading* considers Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2013: 211–29): arguably the most canonical play of the most canonical playwright. Again, the issue is not so much that some digital projects explore canonical authors. Rather, it is that the rhetoric of newness and disruption surrounding digital resources and methods directs attention away from such continuities and in doing so obscures the possibility that digital projects might be critiqued not for departing from non-digital approaches, but for replicating, perpetuating, and even solidifying earlier research paradigms.

This disjunction between rhetoric and practice in digital approaches to literary canons brings to mind Damrosch's description of the existence of a "hypercanon" in an ostensibly "postcanonical" age; and indeed, Damrosch's account of pre-digital scholarship suggests some of the key reasons for the continuing preoccupation with canonical and national literatures in a supposedly globalized, distributed, and democratic digital world. Locating the emergence of this phenomenon in the 1980s, Damrosch defines the "hypercanon" as the tendency for traditionally major authors to hold their position or gain ground despite the widespread characterization of literary studies as expanding or deconstructing the canon. Damrosch ascribes the "hypercanon" predominantly to ideological and social causes. Not only do we inherit a way of thinking about literature in terms of individual, major authors, but these authors provide the point of connection between scholars: a shared reference that becomes even more essential as authors of the

"counter canon" are shared only by specialist subsets within literary studies, and as authors of the "shadow canon" are known only to older scholars (Damrosch 2004).

Similar social and ideological causes underpin the focus of digital research on national, predominantly anglophone, literatures and canonical authors. For scholars who began their research careers in literary fields largely delineated by national boundaries, the questions they know to ask of literature, with or without digital methods, are frequently those articulated in long-standing debates regarding national literary traditions. Likewise, the dominant way of thinking about literary history – as, in William St. Clair's words, a "parade of authors," with canonical authors filing past the commentator's box in chronological order, taken as representative of the historical period in which they wrote (2004: 4) – has remained highly influential, even as technologies for accessing and analyzing literature have changed. Skye Bianco, for instance, argues that one of the ways in which digital literary studies projects make themselves "disciplinarily legible" to institutions and funding organizations is by invoking "an older humanism, a retro-humanism" precisely by focusing on national and/or canonical literatures (2015: 101).

This orientation to national and canonical paradigms is also informed by institutional and infrastructural issues that preceded, but now profoundly shape, digital scholarship. The vast majority of the digital bibliographies and text collections that researchers use to pursue digital research are derived from pre-digital collections, typically those of university libraries and cultural institutions. Any wholesale or selective digitization from this pre-digital record is thus inevitably enacted in relation to the historically contingent notions of value, meaning, and purpose that informed earlier collecting practices. Put simply, because university and other institutional collections are more likely to hold literature by canonical authors and from prominent national literary traditions, these same literary categories will be more likely to characterize digital collections created on their basis. Even the largest digital libraries, such as Google Books and HathiTrust, often understood as global literary records, are predominantly based on the holdings of a relatively small and select group of American and British university libraries. These large digital libraries thus embed the particular cultural perspectives and linguistic orientation of those national contexts, and of their elite universities, into the infrastructure used for digital scholarship. Beyond book digitization programs, most mass-digitized collections arise from anglophone or European contexts: for instance, the largest digital historical newspaper

collections, *Chronicling America* (Library of Congress n.d), the *British Newspaper Archive* (British Library and findmypast), *Europeana* (Europeana), and *Trove* (National Library of Australia), represent American, British, European, and Australian periodicals, respectively. As Élika Ortega writes, "Like their analog counterparts, digital archives impose forms of discursive authority, shape their reading and navigation, grant access to their holdings and obfuscate their deficiencies, give some rein to peruse them freely, but ultimately shape the knowledge that can be extracted out of them" (2018: 233).

The issue of infrastructure is not new to world literary studies. In his account of the institutional separation of world literary studies from comparative literature in American universities in the 1990s, Damrosch notes that the intellectual merits of the respective approaches were foregrounded. Because they studied literature in the original languages, comparative literature programs in Ivy League colleges were held up as more prestigious and intellectually rigorous than programs of world literary studies in wheat-belt institutions, which read literature in translation (2013: 158). Yet the divide was also a matter of infrastructure: it was the extensive library holdings of the wealthier institutions that facilitated the study of literature in the original language, whereas the less wealthy colleges could only support the study of literature in translation. These infrastructural challenges have changed somewhat in the digital age. One of the things that digitization is most routinely celebrated for is overcoming such inequalities of access; and open-access resources allow students and scholars from rich and poor universities to view, for instance, ancient texts in the original language (Crane n.d.). Yet large – and arguably, increasing – sections of the digital archive are behind paywalls.

Certain features of digital collections, and the methods used to explore them, are also likely not only to compound the selection effects arising from their basis in historically constituted collections, but to do so in ways that specifically foreground anglophone authors, works, and national literatures. Such features include algorithms for sorting search results, which typically return to the top of such results the authors and titles that are searched for most often, with the consequence that well-known aspects of the literary historical record are likely to become more well known, while lesser-known aspects are likely to become more obscure. A range of past and present issues that make certain texts more suitable for digitization than others – ranging from historical unevenness in the global distribution of printing technologies to contemporary copyright laws – have made the "nineteenth and early twentieth century Anglophone world," in Lara Putnam's words, "ground

zero of digitization" (2016: 389). Methods for computational text analysis are usually adapted from software created for industrial or scientific purposes, and the dominance of the English language in these contexts means that tools for digitizing and analyzing documents with non-Latin scripts lag behind those for European languages. Considerable technical challenges are involved in applying computational methods to the few multilingual corpuses that exist (Bergenmar and Leppanen 2017: 234). As Risam notes, due to aggressive forms of identity politics operating on the World Wide Web, "the digital cultural record not only must contend with the colonial hangovers from the cultural record but also [with] the forces that are actively constructing its medium as a hostile environment where universities and the academy are under threat" (2017). For all of these reasons, the historical beneficiaries of colonialism are further benefited by contemporary cultural, political, economic, and technological conditions which make it more likely for literature from those countries and regions to be the focus of digitization and digital scholarship.

If, as Greene argues, the aim of world literary studies is "to construct a politics of comparison that does not borrow the inequalities and disproportions of the colonial world itself" (2004: 221), then the digital remediation of the literary record arguably makes that aim more difficult to achieve in embedding and amplifying the presence of canonical authors, national literatures, and elite institutional power within new knowledge infrastructure. Yet in this sense, at least, instead of predetermined categories and subcategories being phenomena that are instituted by digital technologies, as Saussy suggests, that organization of knowledge is often inherited from pre-digital scholarship and the views of the world, and of literary value, that it embodies. The main difference is that those categories, instead of being wrapped in a liberal humanist discourse of global equality, now come packaged in techno-utopian claims of extensive access and democratization.

Despite the constitutive force of this disciplinary, institutional, social, and infrastructural inheritance, digital projects are beginning to explore literature in ways that extend beyond dominant anglophone, canonical, and/or national frameworks. An increasing number of digital collections represent literary works from non-anglophone regions, at least partly in response to and in order to redress the anglophone emphasis and cultural exclusions of the largest digital libraries (Jeanneney 2006). Such enterprises include the pan-Hispanic collection Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, which by 2006 had digitized over 22,000 works; the French digital library Gallica, with over 70,000 volumes digitized; and the Digital Library of India (Ministry of Human

Resource Development n.d.), with approximately 7 million items. The World Digital Library (Library of Congress n.d.) has books, manuscripts, maps, and other primary materials in over a hundred languages and provides search functions, metadata, and data for all records in seven languages, including Arabic, Chinese, and English. Digital libraries have also been – or are being – created for other non-anglophone countries including Brazil, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, and Singapore. In terms of scale, even the largest of these non-anglophone digital libraries is dwarfed by the predominantly anglophone Google Books (which has digitized over 130 million titles). Yet reports on digital literary studies in non-anglophone regions, including Scandinavia and Mexico, suggest that scholarship conducted on the basis of these collections is more likely to emphasize non-canonical authors and literatures and nondominant social groups (see Bergenmar and Leppanen 2017; Ortega 2018).

Some editorial projects create collections specifically to explore how literature traveled across multiple national contexts. Among the earliest, and best known, of these projects is Stanford University's *Mapping the Republic of Letters* (2008), which explores networks of correspondence during the Enlightenment, including of literary figures such as Francesco Algarotti and Voltaire. Influential in demonstrating the capacity of data visualization to contribute to humanities research, the project offers new perspectives on the nature of Enlightenment communities (showing, for example, that they were less cosmopolitan than the participants liked to claim) while explicitly acknowledging the limitations of its underlying data (for instance, noting that only 10 percent of Voltaire's correspondences have been digitized).

More recent editorial projects, including the Bodmer Lab's *A Digital World Literature* (n.d.) and the University of Chicago's *Philologic* (n.d.), create digital environments for exploring literary works from multiple national and/or linguistic contexts. While the former is based on the "library of world literature" amassed by Martin Bodmer, and privileges a carefully curated group of canonical authors, the latter takes a much broader approach, enabling searches across fifty databases with many thousands of literary works in multiple languages, including Ancient Greek, Catalan, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Portuguese, and Spanish. Despite concern that digital research into women's writing is in decline, new projects in world literary studies, including *Swedish Women Writers on Export in the 19th Century* (Leffler et al. n.d.) and *Travelling Texts 1790–1914: The Transnational Reception of Women's Writing at the Fringes of*

Europe (Partzsch et al. n.d.), employ digital resources and methods to investigate the translation and transmission of women's literary works across national and linguistic boundaries.

While these editorial projects work predominantly with digitized book collections, others explore the transnational circulation of texts by analyzing mass-digitized periodicals. The *Viral Texts* project, led by Ryan Cordell and David Smith (2017), uses a machine-learning algorithm to identify frequently reprinted texts in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century newspapers. Focusing in its initial stages on American newspapers, the project is currently moving to incorporate reprinting in British, Dutch, Finnish, German, and Mexican periodicals, so as to understand the mechanisms – material and conceptual – by which texts circulated globally and the effects of this process on the formation of literary cultures (Oceanic Exchanges Project Team). My own editorial work, with Carol Hetherington, identifies fiction in digitized nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Australian newspapers, held by the National Library of Australia's *Trove* database. The resulting collection, *To Be Continued: The Australian Newspaper Fiction Database* (Bode and Hetherington n.d.), contains over 23,000 publications of novels, novellas, and short stories that suggest the cosmopolitanism of early Australian reading practices. While many of these stories originated in America, Australia, and Britain, there is also a significant amount of fiction from other anglophone countries, including Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, as well as works in translation, including from Austria, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Japan, and Russia. Such digital editorial projects function in one respect like print anthologies in world literary studies; in presenting literary works from multiple contexts they expand the range of national literatures that can be studied and included on the curriculum. Yet owing to the expansive capabilities of digital platforms, they are able to collect a much larger range of fiction than print anthologies, whether in terms of the authors, genres, or languages represented.

A number of projects use digital methods to ask the type of contextual and comparative questions that have long characterized world literary studies, but in relation to a wider sample of texts and/or contexts than has been possible previously. Chengzhou He searches databases and e-texts to find references to Isben's *A Doll's House* in Chinese literature from 1911 to 1949, so as to understand how "Isben is received, localized, and turned productive in the Chinese social and cultural spheres" (2017: 158). In connecting empirical historical trends as well as specific literary moments to the political and artistic context in China, He aligns digital research with an event-based

conception of world literary studies that operates at both "micro" and "macro" levels. The *WorldLiterature@UCLA* project is likewise concerned with the ways in which particular texts are translated across cultures, languages, and nations as exemplars of world literature (Kim, Shepard, and Wan n.d.). Focusing on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, the project visualizes correspondence networks, literary translations, and influences on contemporary thinkers in order to locate Goethe and his novel in a global context.

Other projects look beyond the global circulation of specific authors or works, applying computational methods to large bibliographical or textual collections of literature to explore the world literary system in terms of communities and circuits of reception. Richard Jean So and Hoyt Long use the poetry journals in which authors are published to explore how modernist literary communities developed in America, Japan, and China (2013). Because these journals functioned as the institutional sites through which a readership and a market for modernist poetry developed, these patterns of publication indicate differences in the nature of these literary communities, including a contrast between a centralized and interconnected modernist network in America, a bifurcated Japanese field, and discrete and disconnected modernist literary communities in China. I have used the transnational collection of fiction in the *To Be Continued* database to explore the transnational movement and influence of literary works in the nineteenth century. For instance, network analysis of stories that are published on multiple occasions in Australian newspapers indicates the existence of previously unrecorded syndication agencies bringing fiction to, and circulating it within, the Australian colonies (Bode 2017b).

Increasingly literary scholars use forms of computational modeling to explore literary forms, cultures, and understandings that exist in multiple national contexts. Much of this research adapts methods from computational linguistics. One of the earliest of these studies is Matthew Jockers's *Macroanalysis*, which investigates thousands of nineteenth-century British and American novels, employing computational stylistic analysis to show that multiple aspects of this fiction – including genre, time of composition, and the gender of authors – display discernible characteristics across the two national contexts. Where Jockers focuses on two anglophone literary cultures, Andrew Piper investigates multi-language corpuses by defining and modeling formal features of literary works. For instance, Piper uses vector-space analysis of the pre- and post-conversion books of Augustine's *Confessions* to define its narrative structure in terms of distances (such as

between the earlier and later parts of the work). Piper uses this modeling of features to identify occurrences of this conversion plot in a collection of novels and autobiographies in English, French, and German (2015).

In a different article to the one mentioned above, Long and So also model a formal literary feature – in their case, stream of consciousness – in order to explore its transmission across different national literatures and languages (2016). Defining this literary device in terms of thirteen elements (including average sentence length and proportion of sentences without verbs), they track the diffusion of stream of consciousness not only from avant-garde to popular works from a number of anglophone nations, but into Japanese literature. While the construction of models might still incorporate cultural biases from the collections used – for instance, Long and So define anglophone literary cultures by sampling from 10,000 titles most commonly held by American libraries – the practice of computationally defining and exploring formal features of literature is an important development in digital approaches to world literary studies. Resonating with the formalist emphasis in Moretti's work, and with the exploration, in comparative literary studies, of literary phenomena that exist across cultures, these modeling projects propose literary and linguistic elements that are consistent enough to identify computationally despite the different contexts and languages of their production.

Other projects employ computational modeling in ways that align linguistic features of works with the contexts of their reception in order to explore the social and cultural consequences of the global circulation of literature and literary values. In other work relating to the transnational collection of fiction in the *To Be Continued* database, I demonstrate and explore the capacity of machine-learning models to predict the national origins of stories. While such predictive capacity poses the existence, within this transnational market, of discernible national literary traditions, relationships between the different national literatures suggest ways in which an Australian literary tradition developed by incorporating and adapting particular features of British and American fiction (Bode 2018: 157–97). Ted Underwood and Jordan Sellers use machine-learning methods to consider how conceptions of literary value developed in Britain and America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Using a machine-learning model to predict whether British and American poetry collections were reviewed or not, they suggest a correlation between the linguistic features of a work and the literary esteem in which it was held. In doing so, they hypothesize the existence of common, transatlantic standards for literary evaluation that developed gradually over the

nineteenth century, rather than changing suddenly at the end of this period, as has been widely argued. While networks and patterns are still central forms in digital literary studies, as the prominent use of modeling and machine-learning methods in these digital projects shows, the emphasis has largely moved away from the intuitive recognition of connections and resonances that Moretti's work often foregrounds.

As digital and world literary studies are increasingly integrated, there are opportunities for theoretical perspectives from both fields to inform and enrich the other. The profound ways in which social, ideological, and economic factors shape the digital collections with which literary research is now increasingly conducted makes theoretical reflections on information and infrastructure an essential foundation for contemporary literary studies, including world literary studies. Alan Liu's work, which examines the relationships between epistemological and infrastructural regimes, is key in this respect, including his 2004 book *The Laws of Cool* and his 2008 book *Local Transcendence*. His recent claim that humanities researchers must contribute to an emerging "critical infrastructure studies" – indeed, that contemporary cultural studies has, in essence, already become this – points to a major field of inquiry with which world literary studies, and other areas of the humanities, will have to contend in coming decades (e.g., Liu 2017a; Liu 2017b). Early steps along the path to critical infrastructure studies include researchers using existing frameworks from textual studies – particularly scholarly editing and bibliography – to theorize the entities we analyze in digital literary studies (e.g., Bode 2018: 37–57; Cordell 2017; McGann 2014) or offering detailed histories of digital collections such as ProQuest's *Early English Books Online* (Mak 2014) and Gale's *British Nineteenth-Century Newspapers* (Fyfe 2016). While the former studies seek to provide a critical language for understanding the digital entities that literary scholars investigate, the latter emphasize the major implications that the construction of digital collections has for the form and validity of scholarly arguments.

Significant potential also exists for critical discussion of translation in world literary studies to enrich understandings of digitization. To return to Saussy's survey of comparative and world literary studies in the age of globalization, his insistence on "the language of the original, [and] the language of translation . . . as something more than delivery systems for content . . . as having a weight and resistance of its own" is acutely relevant to digitization and its effects (2004: 14). Mechanistic accounts of digitization – as much as translation – overlook or obscure such weight in dividing these practices from "the production of meaning," rendering them "invisible . . . an

extension – faithful or unfaithful – of the original work attributed to the author" (Ungar 2004: 129). In furthering this analogy, what parallels might exist, for instance, between contemporary practices of mass-digitization and Spivak's claim that "all the literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translates, so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan" (1993: 182)? Scholars such as Andrew Piper have begun to draw links between linguistic translation and the transition from words to numbers in digital literary studies (2018). But understandings of digitization could be substantially enhanced by further attention to the political and ethical dimensions of translation explored in comparative and world literary studies.

Some of this potential might be seen in applying, to digitization, Lawrence Venuti's rejection of mechanistic or literalist translation. While Bergenmar and Leppanen note, with reference to digitization, that any translation is an adaptation to culture and language (2017: 239), Venuti's idea of translation as having ethical effects on and a performative relationship to the receiving culture and its dominant resources and ideologies suggests avenues for investigating the complexities of this process. For instance, we might ask whether the adaptations of digitization always domesticate the source text (a claim that Venuti makes of translation because of its inevitable aim to interpret that text in ways that are intelligible and interesting to the receiving situation)? As in Venuti's case studies of translated works, addressing this question for digitization would require an integration of textual analysis and archival research. Such an approach would enable exploration not only of textual contents but of the selection of texts, their formal and discursive features, and the values and beliefs, individual and institutional actors, and representational and medial contexts involved in remediation. The range of factors encompassed by such analysis resonates well with critical infrastructure studies but encourages an extension of the current focus in that field on the conditions of the production of a digitization to the always emergent conditions of reception.

Venuti's focus on the centrality and invisibility of translators to translation also relates to emerging analyses of labor and power relations in digitization (for example, Warren 2018), while signaling interesting and potentially critically productive tensions between translation and digitization in this respect. For instance, while the figure of the translator is an established one in literary culture, who is the digitizer? Is it the librarian or literary scholar who selects the text; the (often female, often black) worker who conducts the scanning; or even the optical character recognition algorithm that transforms image

into text? What does it mean, for a political and ethical conception of digitization, and for understandings of the contemporary humanities more broadly, that this mediating role is thus distributed, including across human and nonhuman actors? Finally, the challenge that Venuti's framework poses to imagine a foreignizing digitization – one that remains legible while disclosing the digitized status of the text and the digitizer's intervention – might prompt questions for humanities research, including for world literary studies, about the relationship between interpretation and political efficacy, on the one hand, and the scale and standardized workflows of digitization, on the other.

My point is not to pose a direct analogy between practices of translation and of digitization; rather, it is to suggest some of the ways in which questions that have long been asked about the effects of translation in a world where resources are unevenly distributed might equally be asked of digitization. While research in critical infrastructure studies is challenging the notion that digitization reproduces the same text, the simultaneously ethical and political orientation of translation studies might be adapted to enable a fuller understanding of the difference that digitization makes by investigating how relations of power – ideological, disciplinary, cultural, historical – shape and constitute digitized documents and mass-digitized collections. Perhaps a combination of critical infrastructure and translation studies could supply an effective foundation for world literary studies in this age of digitization: on the one hand, for interrogating assumptions embedded in the foregrounding of extensive archives, networks, and patterns in both digital and non-digital expressions of world literary studies; on the other, for exploring alternatives to the flat and distributed interconnections proposed by such formal categories in ways that are more attentive to the disparities of power that occur when different communities, cultures, and languages as well as media, technologies, and communication systems intersect.

In the past two decades, "distant reading" has been one of the most influential paradigms in literary studies, and its impact on world literary studies is undeniable. Both within and beyond this field, the idea of distance as a condition of knowledge, and of literary data and computational methods as offering radically new approaches to literature and culture, has been proclaimed and condemned in equal measure. In a surprising number of ways, the debate about "distant reading" reiterates issues prominent in long-standing discussions about the relationship between comparative and world literary studies: regarding the role of the canon and of national literatures in enabling and limiting our understanding of how literature exists and operates

in the world, as well as the meaning and implications of scale – and of a world literary system – in shaping that understanding. The tendency for both critics and advocates of digital resources and methods to emphasize their difference from earlier approaches makes it especially important to consider how the digital infrastructure through which we increasingly study world literature – whether through computational or non-computational means – might re/inscribe inequalities that have shaped and continue to shape the production, circulation, and reception of literature. Although they might amplify, digital technologies do not inevitably reinforce such inequalities, and multiple projects show how digital resources and methods can be used to explore how literary works, communities, traditions, and/or concepts circulate and generate meaning in spaces not aligned with the nation-state.

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PART VIII

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MODES OF READING AND CIRCULATION

40

Transregional Critique and the Challenge of Comparison: Between Latin America and China

ANDREA BACHNER

Beyond the Cartographic Imagination

Do not trust maps. We will not trust maps. We know better. A map can never faithfully represent the territory it claims to map. This is whimsically explored in Jorge Luis Borges's conundrum of the perfect map in "Del rigor de la ciencia" ("On Exactitude in Science"): a completely analog map, one that coincides in size with its objects, is an impossibility. Add to this the problem of temporality: Places to be mapped do not stand still nor wait for the cartographic process to catch up with their dynamic realities. Most importantly, though, maps pose as objective, scientific representations even as they are among some of the most ideologically charged of objects. (Neo-)colonial ideologies produce cartographic desires, like that of Joseph Conrad's protagonist in *Heart of Darkness* who is childishly enchanted by the idea of mapping the blank spaces of the globe. By deft manipulation of scale and definitional finesse, maps can always dismiss local knowledge as blank. In fact, so strong is cartographic power that maps often impose their striations on the spaces of which they produce inadequate yet often strategic representations.

In spite of all our distrust of maps, we are caught up in a cartographic imagination: in particular, imaginaries fueled by certain ways of mapping, as well as in the assumption that we need some kind of cartography or global positioning or conceptual mapping. Even simple topographies become warped by cartographic ideologies, however. Take Latin America and China, for instance. Different discourses and their concomitant cartographic imaginations construct radically different maps of their positions and interactions. In fact, China and Latin America provide a particularly incisive caveat for the cartographic imagination, because of the sheer polarity that marks how we think

them together – as well as apart. In what follows, I will use China and Latin America to analyze the potentials and pitfalls of cartographic thinking, while proposing a method of transregional critique as a multi-scalar, poly-comparative approach to conceiving of shared literary and cultural worlds: as histories marked by orientalist fantasies, networks of literary circulation, translation, and influence, as well as by the challenges of literary worlding in the face of global power dynamics. In other words, spatial patterns, such as the transregional nexus between Chinese and Latin American cultures, provide a starting point for investigating complex relationalities, analogies, and intersections that finally exceed any attempt at cartography.

Transregional cartographies of China and Latin America result in strange constellations. China and Latin America have often been treated as antipodes. In conventional maps of the world, Asia and America occupy opposite ends of a flat space. In Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*), begun in 1822–23, temporality overrides spatiality. The notion of the unidirectional movement of world history from East to West produces a slanted mapping of the world. Even as East and West are geographically relative categories in principle – Hegel concedes that "[Asia] is America's West" – history's sway from the East to the West fixes Asia as the "absolute East" to Europe's "absolute West" (Hegel 1970: 134 and 130 respectively; trans. 1956: 103 and 99, trans. modified). In contrast, for Hegel, the Americas (as well as Australia), constitute the raw, unformed material that has yet to enter world history. For Hegel, on the one hand the "newness" of the American continent is relative, i.e., only its discovery by Western civilization is recent. On the other, its newness is absolute with regard to world history. Hegel underlines this by referencing the continent's geological newness: The Pacific Ocean, as a sea of islands marked by "physical immaturity" (1970: 107, 1956: 80–81) emerges as a space of separation, an unbridgeable gap between Asia and the Americas. In contrast to the stagnant image of Chinese culture that Hegel paints in vivid colors, the cultures of the Americas, even the civilizations of Mexico and Peru, leave hardly an imprint in their evanescence. As "entirely natural" peoples, they vanish under the "breath of European activity" (1970: 108, 1956: 81, trans. modified). Through the absolute binaries of East and West, as well as new and old, Hegel pushes Asia and America to the extremes of known space. If the fastest way from Asia to America crosses the Pacific, turning its back onto Europe, Hegel's imaginary (echoed by the most frequently used world map whose borders cut through the Pacific Ocean) suggests that the Pacific is not a space that both separates two continents and facilitates travel between them. Instead, it becomes a hole,

a break, rent by the virtual (but ideologically and symbolically real) ends of the map. China and Latin America in particular have also long embodied divergent negative mirror images for a Western imagination: China's inscrutable, decadent civilization versus Latin America's unchartered barbarity. From the vantage point of Europe, they are only connected through a history of separation.

Or, this is at least one of the extreme symbolic lenses through which we can read China and Latin America only by way of their disconnection. Its complement, however, ties both spheres into an uncomfortably tight knot of sameness, common roots, or direct influences. Since Columbus's erroneous superimposition of China and the Americas, we have not ceased to fantasize about Latin America and China as closely linked. A set of cultural preconceptions, abetted by homophony, made Columbus think that the "cannibals" of which the indigenous peoples on the newly discovered islands lived in fear were really soldiers of the ruler of China ("Gran Khan") (see Colón 1985: 118 and 146–47; trans. 1987: 131). What later became the stereotype of a savage "New World" was perceived at one point as part of a highly civilized culture, one that rivaled Europe in might and colonial endeavors. While Columbus's error was quickly rectified as Europeans realized that the Americas were a new continent and not part of Asia, fantasies of early cultural contact between China and Latin American persist until today. Most of these do not hold up to scientific scrutiny, such as Gavin Menzies's claim of the Chinese discovery of the "New World" in 1421 or theories by Chinese scholars of sustained colonial endeavors and cultural exchanges between China and pre-Columbian America (see Menzies 2003; see also Wei Juxian 1970). But anthropological circles in the 1960s and 1970s quite seriously discussed the possibility that China and (what is now) Latin America shared cultural roots.[1] The pervasive reappearance of such conjectures tells us much about the logic (and desire) that rule how we think about transcultural connections: Cultural analogies have a way of becoming indices of sameness; cultural links seem only valid when they speak of direct influence via migration or conquest.

The cartographic imagination that thinks Chinese and Latin American cultures together often embodies the extremes of comparative thinking, pitting sameness against total difference. But rather than teetering between uncanny closeness and unbridgeable distance, Latin America and China, like all other places on our planet, are spheres multiply connected by histories of

1 For an example, see Meggers 1975.

migration, commerce, and collaboration, as well as tied together by analogies, cultural resonances, and intercultural fantasies. These extreme examples of mapping show us the limitations of cartography, as it establishes distance, hallucinates about sameness via spatial coincidence or direct contact and subdivides the globe into centers and margins, into hot or cold zones of connectivity. But the fallacies of cartographic thinking are also profoundly instructive. They teach us that it is not enough to trace existing relations, even if this means to excavate erased or underrepresented links. Instead, the power of cartography derives precisely from admixing information about placement and movement in space with fantasies of (dis-)connection. In other words, it is not enough to rectify our cartographic imagination by populating our maps with new cultural hot zones or relational networks. Or to produce ever shinier visualizations of existing phenomena. Instead, we have to question the very discursive patterns of cartographic endeavors – those that come to us ready-made, as well as those that we engage in ourselves.

Whenever we think different places together, mapping imposes itself, even as it also shows its own limitations most clearly. After all, multi-local work yearns for a stabilizing matrix. But even as maps are particularly good at visualizing relations, they are also notoriously bad at capturing the complexity of relationality. Maps in the conventional sense of analog, point-by-point representations of space provide at best an idea of contiguity and distance between different places. Of course, mapping used in a figurative sense can produce much more flexible visualizations and outputs, even as its graphics express different connections still in spatial terms, translated into the spatiality of the medium used. In *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, Franco Moretti argues for the analytical surplus value of "literary maps": "You choose a unit . . . find its occurrences, place them in space . . . or in other words: you *reduce* the text to a few elements, and *abstract* them from the narrative flow, and construct a new, *artificial* object like the maps that I have been discussing. And with a little luck, these maps will be *more than the sum of their parts*" (Moretti 2005: 53, emphasis added). In other words, in order to create a different picture of certain textual relations, we have to spatialize beyond (or even against) a work's textual flow, to express relations (in the spatial medium of the map) against its relation (in the sense of "narrative" or "report"). For Moretti, the analytical gain outweighs the fact that we have reduced a text to a few choice objects or phenomena that shine in their new cartographic constellation. Such visualizations are "more than the sum of their parts" with respect to the textual details they focus on, precisely because they integrate them into new pictures. But from the vantage point of a literary text in all its complexity, these maps are

indeed only a very small part of the whole picture. Even were we to produce a multitude of maps and graphs from elements of the same text, we would have to come up with maps that show connections between individual visualizations, then maps of those maps, and so on. And this does not yet account for the fact that our imagination of what can be mapped and in what ways is limited, dependent, for instance, on what we deem suitable categories for representation and on the connections that we have been conditioned to recognize as those worthy of attention. If such problems occur even in the mapping of a single literary text, how much more problematic is this for cartographies of world literary and intercultural constellations in all their complexities?

Additional problems arise when we think beyond the map as representation and pay attention to its production and use instead. The very process of mapping puts the producers and users of a map into a paradoxical position. To produce a map also means to produce its outside; cartographies set up boundaries between an inside and an outside, even though their very functioning presupposes the blurring of those boundaries, too. As Hong Kong author Dung Kai-cheung reminds us by way of the etymography of the Chinese character for "map," "圖," "composed of a square frame around the figure of a moving man," mapping means policing borders: "The border endows the place it encloses with independence in regard to the outside and unity in regard to the inside. It rejects 'whatever is not this place' and embraces 'everything that belongs to the place'" (2011: 56, trans. 36–37). She who draws a map projects herself necessarily into a position at its outside, even though she usually inhabits a space that forms at least a continuum with the cartographic representation, if it is not directly part of the mapped territory. He who uses the map has to apply its visualization to his own spatial sense. A map is not really a map unless it orients us. And this means that we have to translate what it shows us to the plane of our own literal or conceptual movement. This manipulation and mutual implication of interior and exterior becomes most evident in maps of actual space, but we can easily extend this to conceptual or literary mapping, too: After all, in the act of reading and analysis, we enter into a virtual continuum with a text. Any ecstatic position of the critic or theorist is, thus, artificial. But instead of invalidating the necessity of mapping, the insight that cartographic ecstasy is a construct effectively makes mapping all the more important. For Fredric Jameson, for instance, the erasure of distance between subject and space in what he diagnoses as our postmodernist era makes mapping imperative, even as its representational and political shortcomings are evident. The "cognitive

mapping" that Jameson proposes is as global as it is social and political, since it will "endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system." But its modus operandi is "as yet unimaginable," as traditional cartographic modes fall short of representing "the world space of multinational capital" in a way that positions us as "individual and collective subjects" with the "capacity to act and struggle" ([1991] 2001: 54). We need cartographies to navigate an increasingly complex world, even as our maps leave us with warped notions of this world. We need their conceptual vantage point for the sake of cognition and action, but we are entangled in their representations, as well as complicit in their ideological pitfalls.

To analyze global structures in their intercultural intricacies and transregional scope means to map links between cultures in a way that ultimately causes the very concept of mapping to implode through an excess of complexity. This involves a radical reimaging of relationality and, indeed, of comparison: as a flexible and multifocal operation that assumes that its objects are internally hybrid and fuzzy rather than clearly delimited; as a method that often has to work with uneven dialogues, weak links, hallucinatory superimpositions, and tenuous affinities; as an endeavor that treats the interactions between critic and object as another dimension of relation. Let us be taught by intercultural phenomena to reimagine the world as a dynamic, multidimensional crisscrossing – across oceans and continents, across time zones and epochs, across people and texts, and beyond into the territories of the discursive, the imaginary, and the aesthetic. Literary texts and cultural objects are complexly imbricated in the world: Even as they are part of the world, they also have the power to represent, and thus to shape, what we regard as our world. Rather than neat patterns generated by one analytical criterion, one type of link, and one category of phenomena, we want the complexity and messiness of multiply entangled structures: both for looking at the worlds of connections that texts partake in and for imagining our shared worlds differently.

Transregional Critique and Poly-Comparative Clusters

My example of two extremes of cartographic mapping above has already introduced the scope and focus of my own endeavor of literary mapping: between Chinese and Latin American cultures. In other words, my laboratory for investigating the deep structures of intercultural thinking, of how we

compare – taken here in its most basic etymological sense of "putting together" – is defined spatially, as a transregional constellation. But if mapping is so problematic, why insist on the "transregional," after all? Why invoke a category that is so clearly spatial when the relational and comparative networks I propose are cartographic only in an extremely figurative sense? When one of my main points is that location and movement make up only a few strands of a much larger unruly ever-changing constellation?

I have three answers to this question. One is pragmatic, the second one procedural, and the third one conceptual. The pragmatic answer first: Comparatists are particularly prone to accidents of linguistic and cultural expertise, which also makes us put places together even where their links do not (yet) establish a comparative field.[2] In addition, the definition of expertise and the rules of academic formation still abide by linguistic, ethnic, cultural, or national categories. The procedural answer next: While every category comes with its own ideological baggage, the scale of a transregional approach allows the best lens for the analysis of the poly-relational clusters and networks I am interested in. The world is too abstract a point of departure for my analysis, one culture or nation not enough space for investigating meaningful global connections. Links within one region are important, but impossible to think without a transregional perspective, even as we acknowledge that the definition and limits of a region are profoundly problematic. Thinking across bigger spatial units allows us not to treat the global as (Western) universal, but to espouse multiple perspectives and positionalities.[3] And finally, the conceptual answer: To critically investigate the rules of intercultural and global thinking also means to inhabit, plow, and turn over the same terrain. Since spatial categories are its conceptual core, either implicitly or explicitly, a spatial category is where I will do my work: as a category whose scale constantly reminds us that our work is selective and insufficient, as a heuristic that will be transformed, even left behind as our work progresses, but also as a term rife with conceptual potential.

The very term "transregional" implies friction, a union of competing tendencies. The invocation of "regions" speaks of locatable entities, of (more or less) stable territories with clear boundaries. As such, it threatens to replicate the skewed politics of ideological units such as "areas." The prefix "trans-," in contrast, speaks of movement, of categories in motion, maybe even of fluid becomings. If one element of the term denotes fixity, the desire

2 My own linguistic expertise limits my reflections on Asia to China.

3 For a reflection on the possibilities and limits of regional thinking, see Chen 2010: 211–55.

to territorialize, the other promises to destabilize and deterritorialize instead. But in order to conceive of the dynamic energy of "trans-," it seems that we have to imagine it as an in-between – not as a "trans-" as such, but always in relation to some points that define its interstitial movement as a vector. Its transgression has to activate the very limits that it proposes to violate.

Rather than emphasizing either the territorializing or the deterritorializing force of the term "transregional," I will tie it to a critique that pays attention to this tug-of-war between opposing forces. A transregional critique implies a critique by way of a transregional approach, as well as a critique of the "transregional": of the idea of "region" on the one hand, of the idea of "trans" on the other. To critique the notion of "region" means to recognize regional boundaries as arbitrary, yet conventionally determined and discursively fixed boundaries.[4] Questions of power and representation lie at the heart of this critical endeavor, as it concerns itself with how these categories have emerged in the first place and strives to imagine other connections. By the same token, the cultural objects under analysis belong to a "region" only tentatively, so as to set up and populate a playing field that will be in constant transformation. As such, transregional critique works beyond regional categories even before or without putting emphasis on the notion of "trans-." In a complementary movement, transregional critique is also wary of the power of "trans-." Even as it can bring categories into motion by crossing boundaries, "trans-" also resonates with our analytical desire to see movement or in-betweenness as resistant qualities per se. Rather than taking the disruptive energies of "trans-" for granted, we have to attend to the politics and concomitant imaginaries at work. Motion between spaces, processes of becoming, contact between places, or fantasies of cultural positionalities are also part and parcel of the discursive forces that striate the globe in profoundly unequal ways – even as they allow us to "world" differently.

To invoke the "transregional" means to point to a problem inherent in the representation of movement as such. We visualize it most often with the help of points or at best vectors – but rarely as tangents, curves, pulses, etc. We tend to focus on points of departure and points of arrival, thus implicitly freezing motion unidirectionally (if only for a moment). This is also frequently true for world literary and other relational approaches to interculturality with their emphasis on translation, literary influence, or patterns of colonialism or diaspora. Unless something moves from A to B (even though

4 For a critique of the notions of Asia and Latin America, see Wang Hui 2002 and Mignolo 2005.

this is just one part of a more complex trajectory or even if there is movement also from B to A), it hardly ever appears on our critical radar. And even as we are really interested in what happens in the dynamic space between A and B, we have to view it by focusing yet again on A and B. Even as we actively put A and B together, as end points of a movement under analysis, we tend to insist on their extant connection and downplay our own critical agency in selecting, analyzing, and thus, to a certain extent, creating this very link. To engage in a comparative critique that takes the transregional as its scale is certainly not exempt from these conceptual pitfalls, even as its As and Bs become multiple. In fact, we can call these "pitfalls" only as long as we also recognize that these traps for thinking across cultures are, in fact, not sterile or abortive endeavors, but necessary and profoundly productive venues. Likewise, transregional critique does not steer us clear of conceptual quagmires. If anything, it leads us more deeply into dangerous terrain. But – to remain within the same metaphorical field – it allows us to encounter a vaster variety of pits, traps, lures, and snares.

Comparative research between Chinese and Latin American cultures is particularly rife with creative traps. It falls outside of disciplinary boundaries, as well as being marked by the politics and positionalities of academic traditions. Divided by the boundaries of disciplines and areas, it is also overshadowed by the conventionalized binaries of East and West, and North and South. Even as both are no longer (or have never really been) peripheries to Europe's center or appendixes to North American power, but have come to occupy important geopolitical, economic, and cultural roles, cultural imaginaries still couch them as marginal. Research that establishes connections between both cultural spheres moves uneasily even within more capacious frameworks. For the field of transpacific studies, some parts of China and Latin America are entirely too continental. And a world power such as China does not quite fit into the category of the global South either. In any case, many approaches or categories overlook cases and connections that fall outside of the conventional patterns of geopolitical panoramas, economic networks, diasporic movements, or literary influence. But to understand the complex dynamics between cultures that constitute the pulse of our global world, we need to pay attention to unexpected links and unconventional constellations, too.

Let me give you an example of the kind of transregional, poly-comparative work I envision. In 1965, Mexican writer Salvador Elizondo publishes his novel *Farabeuf*. Elizondo's complex experimental text clusters around the French doctor Farabeuf and his obsession with the Chinese execution

method of death by a thousand cuts (*lingchi*) in end-of-the-century China, as well as around a man and a woman who reenact (or fantasize about reenacting) this Chinese torture in France. The attempt at reading this text as part of a transregional network between Latin American and Chinese cultures is bound to fail by most definitions and methodologies. The novel contains references to China – to the Chinese script, to death by a thousand cuts, to the Boxer rebellion and China's defeat by the allied forces. But *Farabeuf*'s "China" is a fantasy: that of Elizondo, but also, in the novel's diegesis, that of the French protagonists. Thus, at best, we can put the novel into one category with orientalist stereotypes of Chinese cruelty, only here couched in more aesthetically and formally complex terms and marked by a meta-orientalist drive, as the text thematizes its protagonists' exoticist infatuation.

Once we trace the catalyst of this fantasy, we do find a Chinese intertextual, or rather, intermedial, kernel that is not only referenced but also literally embedded in this Mexican novel: a photograph of a man suffering death by a thousand cuts. Executioners and onlookers crowd around the victim who has already suffered various wounds as one torturer starts to cut into one of his legs. The photograph shows a Chinese scene: Chinese protagonists in a Chinese setting. But upon closer scrutiny this intermedial transfer between China and Mexico is multiply interrupted. The "Chinese" photograph in *Farabeuf* forms part of one of several series taken during the last *lingchi* executions before the practice was banned in 1905. Most likely, this and other similar pictures were photographed by Westerners. In any case, they were intended mainly for a Western audience, reminders of Chinese horrors and the West's superiority that circulated widely all over Europe in the aftermath of the Boxers' defeat.[5] As such, the photograph is not the product of a single culture but indexes an ambience of violent cultural contact instead.

Between the photograph and *Farabeuf*, more than half a century and several other textual transfer stations intervened. In fact, Elizondo reveals his source in *Cuaderno de Escritura* (*Writer's Notebook*): Georges Bataille's *Les Larmes d'Éros* (*The Tears of Eros*) of 1961 (see Elizondo 1988: 74). Bataille closes this book, a richly illustrated compendium of the philosopher's reflections on violence and eroticism, with the chapter "Chinese Torture." The *lingchi* photo embedded in *Farabeuf*, accompanied by further photographs of death by a thousand cuts, plays an important role here, as Bataille singles it out as the locus of his own ecstatic communion and insight and, as a gift from

5 For a thorough study of *lingchi* and its European circulation, see Brook, Bourgon, and Blue 2008.

Bataille's psychoanalyst, part of a personal history of circulation. Consequently, before Elizondo happens upon the photograph in *The Tears of Eros* and integrates it in his novel, it has already traveled from text to text, from hand to hand – irrespective of whether some of these trajectories are fact or fiction. And even as Elizondo emphasizes (like Bataille) the shock value of the photograph, his novel fantasizes about an alternative origin and another radical use for the photograph. What looked like a good text for thinking about Chinese-Latin American links at first glance has turned into a conceptual cul-de-sac. At best, we can read *Farabeuf* as negotiating the cultural positionality of a Mexican intellectual vis-à-vis the center of Europe (i.e., France). But even this reading would beg the question of identity politics: In what sense is *Farabeuf* a Mexican novel? While we can tick off some boxes on an imaginary list of criteria for discerning a text's national and regional identity, some important ones remain unchecked: It is written in Spanish and was published in Mexico, but it makes no reference to a Latin American context; its author was a Mexican citizen but wrote the novel during his stay in France.

Let us approach this from a different direction, then. If we take Rey Chow's proposal of thinking interculturality by way of entanglements seriously, as "a topological looping together that is at the same time an enmeshment of topics," as a "figure for meetings that are not necessarily defined by proximity or affinity," but "might be conceivable through partition and partiality rather than conjunction and intersection, and through disparity rather than equivalence" (Chow 2012: 1–2), then instead of looking for connections, we could start by charting the lack of connections. If we cannot analyze direct links between China and Mexico through *Farabeuf*, we can trace their lack and analyze the concomitant cultural and political logic. The intertextual link constituted by the photograph, with its multiple relays, is weak. The novel, although meta-orientalist, is still orientalist at heart. Written in the 1960s in France, it references turn-of-the-century China, with no reference to the new Maoist China that European as well as Latin American leftist intellectuals were so fascinated by. By the same token, it dwells on Chinese-European contact (such as the allied victory over the Boxers), but makes no reference to a whole history of Chinese immigration to Mexico and the violence suffered by the Chinese at the hands of Sinophobe Mexicans. The absence of any reference to Mexico in the novel also makes any reflection on a shared marginal status of Mexico and China (either at the turn of the century or in the 1960s) vis-à-vis the European cultural center impossible. This tells us a lot about biased cultural patterns: of European

orientalist fascinations with old (but not modern) China; of the framing of Chinese culture as the distant other (but not part of one's home, for instance in the form of diasporic communities); of the fact that fantasies of a shared cultural centrality (with Europe) tend to override expressions of solidarity between peripheries (such as Mexico and China). But let us go a step further by being attentive to other comparative criteria and constellations, ones that allow us to put texts and cultures together but that are at the margins of the usual suspects of relational thinking. For instance, rather than reading *Farabeuf* as yet another example of the unidirectional movement of cultural influence (from France to Mexico), upon closer scrutiny, other intercultural trajectories emerge. The back matter of the French original of *The Tears of Eros* (omitted in the English translation) shows a painted rendition of the scene in Bataille's (and *Farabeuf*'s) photograph by the Spanish artist José Gutiérrez Solana, appended with a reference to an unnamed text (dated 1944) by Spanish intellectual Ramón Gómez de la Serna who emigrated to Argentina in the 1930s. One of Bataille's sources – apart from French texts and a copy of the photograph that he supposedly owned – had a Latin American origin that referenced Gutiérrez Solana's painting *Un revolucionario* (A Revolutionary) created around 1930. Gutiérrez Solana, on the other hand, based his paintings and earlier sketches presumably on a scene of Chinese torture seen in a wax diorama touring through Spain, as he describes it in his book *La España negra* (*Black Spain*) of 1920. Transatlantic connections between Spain and Latin America, as well as the use of different media (texts, photographs, dioramas, paintings) thicken the circulatory network between China, different places in Europe (such as France and Spain), and Latin America.

A second look at Bataille's chapter "Chinese Torture" in *The Tears of Eros* produces another, quite different link between China and Latin America. While the chapter reflects on *lingchi* and is lavishly illustrated with photographs of the Chinese execution method, another image is appended to the end of the chapter: folio 54 of the Codex Vaticanus 3738, an image that shows an "Aztec human sacrifice around 1500" (Bataille 1961: 237; trans. 1989: 207). Here, China and Mexico are put (almost) on the same page: as exemplars of unusual cruelty through the lens of Western culture. Even though Bataille uses *lingchi* and Aztec sacrifice in different places throughout his work as valued examples of eroticism and not as proof of another culture's savagery, the cultural logic that allows Bataille to juxtapose them in this way is suspect: Two as radically dissimilar scenes function in juxtaposition only by way of a profound erasure of their cultural and historical contexts. Their comparability, or, in fact,

interchangeability, is contingent upon a violent deracination. One wonders if Elizondo was aware of the presence of the "Mexican" scene in *The Tears of Eros* or what role it played in his decision to write *Farabeuf* as a reflection on a French infatuation with Chinese violence.

In these networks and analogies China remains a remote resonance or a mere cultural cipher, however. And yet, when we look beyond the content of *Farabeuf* or the concrete intertext of the *lingchi* photograph, there is also a formal Chinese element at work: The divinatory practice of the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes* serves as a structural catalyst for *Farabeuf*: Elizondo uses its hexagrammatic permutations as inspirations for the scenes of his novel. Chinese content (framed in the novel as French fantasy) takes a Chinese shape; literary form has been transferred from China to Mexico. From this vantage point, we can put *Farabeuf* in an intertextual continuum, the terrain of translations of the *Yijing* and other texts (such as Elizondo's novel) influenced by it. Since Elizondo produced a preface for the Spanish translation of the *Yijing*, we can also reflect on the author's sinological training in particular or on the circulatory patterns of sinological knowledge in Europe and through Europe to Latin America in general. When we look farther afield in Latin American literature (and beyond) we find other texts that use Chinese sources as formal inspirations: Farabeuf's *Yijing* would then stand in a cluster of texts together with Jorge Luis Borges's fantasy of the total (Chinese) novel in his 1941 story "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan" ("The Garden of Crisscrossing Paths," 1971) or Julio Cortázar's "La noche boca arriba" ("The Night Face-Up," 1967) with its paradoxical loop structure inspired by Zhuangzi's butterfly dream paradox. And with Cortázar's story we have a text that uses a "Chinese" form but content drawn from the pre-Columbian past as well as the present of Mexico – an interesting counterpoint to Bataille's juxtaposition of Aztec and Chinese cruelty.

We can also extend our analytical vision to encompass texts that are inspired by and dialogue with Bataille's *The Tears of Eros* and his fixation on the photograph of a Chinese execution. First in Latin America, for example. We can thus critically juxtapose Elizondo's *Farabeuf* with an episode around *lingchi* photographs in Julio Cortázar's 1963 novel *Rayuela* (*Hopscotch*, 2005), as well as with Severo Sarduy's reflections on the representation of *lingchi* in Latin American texts from the 1960s in his 1969 *Escrito sobre un cuerpo* (*Written on a Body*, 1989). We could then look for reflections on *lingchi* in Chinese-language contexts, for instance the 2001 novel *Tanxiang xing* (*Sandalwood Death*) by Mainland writer Mo Yan or the 2002 performance piece *Ling chi: Echoes of a Historical Photograph* (*Lingchi kao*) by artist Taiwanese Chen Chieh-jen. And this constellation of texts across cultures can teach us much about

cultural positionality and the stakes of writing back against Western orientalism from different vantage points and in different historical contexts.

These are just some possible comparative intersections, sketched very briefly here. Rather than doing justice to the intricate connective networks that a work like Elizondo's *Farabeuf* allows us to access, they are meant to provide a glimpse of the rich panorama opened up by a transregional critique that operates by way of poly-comparative clusters. The kinds of constellations that emerge from this approach hold important lessons for putting literature and the world together. They show us that we need to diversify the patterns that determine how we place a text and how we put it into motion or in comparison. By the same token, they make us aware of the complex relations and intersections between texts, imaginaries, and realities, as well as of the fact that our own critical and analytical endeavor is not aloof, but woven into and complicit with the patterns we trace. In short, they thus force us to rethink the politics of the cartographies we live by. After all, to forge connections or to ignore relations, to define what is comparable and what incommensurable forms the basis for an understanding of cultural difference and, potentially, the grounds for an ethics of interculturality.

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Reading World Literature through the Postcolonial and Diasporic Lens

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In "The Library of Babel," Jorge Luis Borges describes a library of "perhaps an infinite number of hexagonal galleries" which contains, among other things, "a mirror which faithfully duplicates all appearances" and from which men infer that the library is in fact not infinite. For their part mystics who consult the library claim that their ecstasy reveals to them "a circular chamber containing a great circular book, whose spine is continuous and which follows the complete circle of the wall." However, "their testimony is suspect; their words obscure" because "this cyclical book is God." As if these self-canceling and tantalizing details were not enough, we are also told that "for every sensible line of straightforward statement, there are leagues of senseless cacophonies, verbal jumbles." Borges's library is not merely something that one might imagine and thus hope for, but rather an entity that takes on the elusive shape of a multigenerational enigma that extends from the past into the present and the future. If the library is a multigenerational enigma, it is because it holds the prospect of completion at bay while at the same time eliciting the impulse to add to it. And each addition, in each language, opens up the possibility of a further plenitude of disparate tongues as each language also harbors within itself the possibility of internal proliferation. Translation also inserts the specters of meanings within and between languages that did not appear in the original so that the library is also full of whispering ghosts that elude all known boundaries. The library contains, yet spawns; rationalizes, yet confounds. It is to the image of the library as a suggestive enigma of boundary crossing that I want to turn in exploring the links between postcolonialism, diasporic literatures, and world literature.

Debates on world literature are often conducted around a set of recurrent concepts. They include the following: world-as-system, transnationalism, republic of letters, scales, networks, comparativism, classification, evaluation,

canon formation, translation, citation, and circulation. These concepts appear in different configurations and are multidimensional and overlapping. While the question of what exactly might be defined as world literature was not central to postcolonial studies until the early 2000s, the issues of canon formation and how to reform reading practices have always been central since postcolonialism's emergence as a key subfield of literary studies in the late-1980s and early 1990s. More importantly, the central questions of how postcolonialism might help reshape literary studies in general have always been at the core of concerns in the field and have been repeatedly signaled by scholars such as Timothy Brennan, Robert Young, Franco Moretti, Gayatri Spivak, Debjani Ganguly, and Aamir Mufti, among others.[1] But it is to Commonwealth literature, one of the precursors of postcolonial literary studies proper, that we must turn to grasp how the key concepts noted earlier have shaped the perceived relationship between literatures from erstwhile colonies and world literature.

Bruce Sutherland at Penn State College (now University) and Joseph Jones at the University of Texas were the first to introduce courses under the rubric of Commonwealth literature in the United States, and for that matter anywhere else in the world. They and their colleagues subsequently set up an annual Conference on British Commonwealth Literature (CBCL) that started meeting in 1958. And in 1961 A. L. McLeod, of the State University of New York, edited *The Commonwealth Pen*, the first anthology in the budding field, published by Cornell University Press. The CBCL initiated a bi-annual *Newsletter* in 1962 and in 1965 they secured permanent Group status at the MLA. In 1967 the CBCL renamed its *Newsletter* "World Literature Written in English," which went on to become a fully fledged international journal of the same name in 1970. And in 2004 *World Literature Written in English* was renamed the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* and moved its headquarters from the UK to Australia. The direction of this move is not entirely accidental, since much of the early activity in the field of Commonwealth literature focused predominantly on the white settler societies of Australia and South Africa. Concerns with indigeneity during that phase were absent in the early Commonwealth curricular offerings and anthologies, and came to feature sporadically only in the 1990s and early 2000s, with a few pathbreaking monographs and collections that paid specific attention to indigeneity in Australia, South Africa, and the United States.[2] It was only from the 1960s,

1 For such explicitly theoretical debates about the relationship between the two fields, see Brennan 1997; Moretti 2000; Spivak 2003; Ganguly 2016; Mufti 2018.

2 See especially, Hodge and Mishra 1992; Schwarz and Ray 2004; and McLeod 2007.

with the increasing global visibility of a raft of writers from the newly independent countries of Africa, South Asia, and the Caribbean, that Commonwealth literary studies became truly international in scope, if not, as we shall see shortly, necessarily comparative in tenor.

What passed for early American academic leadership in the field of Commonwealth literature was quickly overtaken by Norman Jeffares and his colleagues at the University of Leeds, with the first conference on the subject in the UK held at Leeds in 1964. The *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* was also founded in the same year. It has to be noted that the Leeds victory in the early struggles to establish control over the field was won not exclusively from the academic domain but with the heavy support of British cultural and political institutions such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Group, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the British Council, among others. The BBC World Service, started in 1932 as the Empire Service, was aimed principally at English speakers across the British empire. Established in 1934 under the auspices of the "British Committee for Relations with Other Countries," with the express purpose of "specializing in international cultural and educational opportunities," the subsequently renamed British Council for its part has established offices in 114 countries worldwide, including several in East Asia, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South America. The BBC World Service and the British Council have without doubt been the most important instrument for the maintenance of the cultural hegemony of English throughout the formerly colonized world since its inception. Alongside the Title VI scheme of the US Defense Department, the two British institutions have ensured the continuing and firm link between English, American and area studies as significant external organizing principles for imagining a domain of the world republic of letters. Aamir Mufti is not entirely hyperbolic when he argues that "It is incontestably the case that the number of languages spoken on the planet has continually shrunk in the modern era and continues to do so in our times and that English, broadly conceived, is often the beneficiary and the agent of such changes" (Mufti 2018: 12). The "broadly conceived" of Mufti's formulation is important to bear in mind because it also hints at the fact that the transplantation of the English language into various places and climes has effectively converted it into a language that, despite its apparent global reach, does not always coincide everywhere with the assumed notions of prestige and correctness of the language that is spoken in British Isles. Stefan Hegelsson also notes that in terms of source languages of translation, English "is so dominant that it is regarded as 'hyper-central', overshadowing the other languages that nonetheless enjoy a central position: French, German, and

Russian" (Helgesson 2018: 86). The acknowledgment of the centrality of English in relation to how we might think of postcolonial literature and the world republic of letters was first mooted in a critical way by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in their landmark *The Empire Writes Back*, where they designate their sense of the diffusion and local conversions of the language with their choice of the small case "english" and "englishes" for outlining the central dynamics of the then-burgeoning field of postcolonial literary studies.[3] We shall return to the point about the centrality of English in relation to the question of linguistic deterritorialization and demographic circulation and their relationship to world literature later, but suffice it to note for now that what passes for the centrality of English within the global republic of letters is not just the source of major institutional investments but also the site of intense debate about the relationship between the local and global in the world at large.

Elaborating on Edward Said's insights in *Orientalism*, Aamir Mufti has argued quite persuasively that the expansion of the purview of the republic of letters in Europe cannot be separated from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century activities of the orientalist translations of various languages from the Middle East and India. But central to the expansion of the idea of the republic of letters was the installation of what Mufti calls the Herderian "chronotope of the indigenous," defined by him as "spatiotemporal figures of habitation (in a place) in deep time – that became canonical for humanistic knowledge in the nineteenth century" (Mufti 2018: 74). The chronotope of the indigenous was primarily configured in terms of the "nation" in the nineteenth century, the idea of one nation, one people, one language, and one historical destiny. The Herderian unification of the political with the ethnic and the linguistic leads to many forms of ethno-nationalism and shows itself in the most unlikely of places, such as in the early efforts of Noah Webster and his colleagues in the early nineteenth century to specify different forms of spelling for commonplace English words ("program" rather than "programme," "center" rather than "centre," "color" rather than "colour," "honor" rather than "honour") so as to distinguish between American English and its British variant (see Venezky 1999; Algeo 2008). Even though the formation of Commonwealth literary studies was very different from that of the orientalism of previous centuries, the chronotope of the indigenous was central to how the field was organized. Two contradictory impulses underpinned anthologies or collections in the field

3 Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1989. Hegelsson (2018) also draws attention to the "hyper-centrality" of English as the source language of most translations that circulate in the world today, thus confirming the views of Mufti and Griffiths et. al before him.

of Commonwealth literature into the 1980s. The first is the principle of coevalness, and the other is that of an implicit hierarchy among the cultures that provide the sources of that literature. Since the term "Commonwealth" itself was inherently a convenient political as opposed to literary label, it was used from the beginning to demarcate the literature coming out of Britain's former colonies from the rest of English Literature. The privileging of the British empire as the primary horizon for organizing literatures from the formerly colonized world was one of the first things to be discarded by postcolonial theory from at least the 1990s. As a rule, postcolonialism organized the field of literary studies according to a variant model that did not necessarily privilege the Commonwealth as such but, rather, sought to bring together for comparison literatures from different parts of the global South.[4] And yet at the same time, despite the expansion of the comparative possibilities, postcolonialism has not completely overthrown the default imperial model as a principle of organization. This has extended to the organization of francophone, Hispanic, and lusophone literatures. In the case of India, what passed for postcolonial "Indian" literature has not included literatures from any of India's twenty-three official languages, only literatures written in English. This persistent conundrum has been the subject of critique within postcolonial studies, as we can see from Gayatri Spivak's *Death of a Discipline* and in Karin Barber's trenchant essay on Yoruba language literature before that (Spivak 2003; Barber 1995).

Contrastively, the principle of implicit hierarchy is still shared by both Commonwealth and postcolonial models of interpretation. This is mainly because of race and how this category of identity is thought to cross-articulate with questions of historical oppression. Hence Kenyan literature is considered intrinsically more postcolonial than Canadian literature, given that the first was shaped in large measure by a rabid and oppressive settler-cum-administrative colonialism and is from Africa, while the second draws from the dynamics of settler colonialism and is obviously centered in a developed economy. But this implicit deployment of the indigenous chronotope to privilege certain postcolonial regions above others ignores the contrast between colonialism as a principle of territorial expansion and colonialism as a principle of population management. Each of these principles raise different questions for the *post*colonial literature that is produced in their wake and thus how they might relate to world literature. The colonialism of

4 For examples of Commonwealth literature anthologies, see Robertson 1966 and King 1991.

territorial expansion is in many respects the default understanding of colonialism and is explicable with reference to examples of the British in India and the West Indies, the French in Martinique or Senegal, and the Portuguese in Angola or Brazil. The colonialism of population management is much more complicated and turns not on territorial expansion but the desire to press heterogeneous populations under the sign of the homogeneous nation-state. Seen in this second dimension, England's centuries-long colonialism of Ireland replicates both principles, while Spain's opposition to Catalan independence is a species of the second.[5] The point to note is that practices developed from the domain of colonial territorial expansion are readily deployed for internal population management, while the policies devised for internal population management can readily be deployed across territories and borders. By elaborating how the concept of "English literary studies" is developed first in India during the nineteenth century and then transferred for shaping education in Britain itself, Gauri Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquest* illustrates the process of transfer from colonial territory to metropole, while the negrification of the Irish that was symbolized in the way they were represented in debates on the potato famine as well as in the pages of *Punch* magazine in the nineteenth century reveals the process by which a racial ideology was perfected close to home simultaneously as it was being deployed elsewhere in the empire (Viswanathan 1989; Greenblatt 2000; Young 2008).

While comparativism in the field of Commonwealth literature was much sought-after, it was rarely achieved, a concern that was highlighted in several editorials of the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* throughout the 1980s. After attending the Association of Commonwealth Literature conference in Nice in 1987, Alistair Niven was to note that:

> We are a long way from those gatherings of ten years or more ago when "What is Commonwealth literature?" vied with "Can the English language develop its own forms in different countries?" as the hoariest theme of the event . . . There is in these new developments in criticism a strongly historical bias, with *much greater emphasis than before on the place of indigenous and immigrant minorities*. Commonwealth literature is no longer seen as a single movement, albeit a slightly iconoclastic one, which is trying to break down a metropolitan monolith. It is fractured and complex, achieving its energy from different currents which converge, as in the sea, from many sources. The critic's task is to recognize this diversity and to resist the tendency of the

5 On the difference between territorial colonialism and the colonialism of population management, see Quayson 2016

> past to examine a single connection – usually that between the new literature, perceived as a national entity, and England.
>
> (Niven 1988: 1, emphasis added)

Even though Niven directs attention to the development of interest in indigenous and migrant communities as the reason for the move in the field from isolationism to comparativism, the sources of energy that ultimately led to the attenuation of interest in Commonwealth literature and the rise of postcolonialism must be traced much further afield. The primary challenge to the Eurocentric canon had been enshrined as an active principle during the American Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. An immediate outcome of the movement was the rise of ethnic studies programs in the United States, with the first African American Studies program established at Berkeley in 1968. By the 1980s it had been joined by not only other African American programs but also a range of ethnic studies offerings. The key feature of these new initiatives was that they were first and foremost interdisciplinary, and by the same token also comparative, even if in an often intra-hemispheric rather than cross-regional sense. Several of the new ethnic studies courses in the United States taught Commonwealth literature as a counterpoint to standard Euro-American canonical texts in the hope of generating literary dialogue outside of the metropolitan centers of power.

In Britain on the other hand, the coming-of-age of the generation of immigrants that had arrived in the country shortly after World War II (the *Empire Windrush* generation of 1947) and of their children meant fresh agitations about both social conditions and also about how these new immigrants and their descendants were represented in public discourse and in the curriculum. The various London riots of the 1980s were collectively a critical threshold in this respect. While the riots were primarily aimed at the Metropolitan Police, the social ferment that they signified went well past the insensitive racial policies of the time. Rather, as Stuart Hall was to note in several interventions, the race riots were the sign of a new claim to what constituted Britishness that was being put forward by post-World War II immigrants and their children.[6] While several economies in Africa and the Caribbean were already struggling in the lead-up to the period of racial ferment in Britain, many of them went on to

6 Stuart Hall's astute interventions on the race and class nature of Britain are widely cited, but perhaps the most relevant to the current discussion are the "New Ethnicities" (1996) and his coedited collection *Policing the Crisis* (1978). Tracing Hall's life and times from the 1950s, John Akomfrah's film *The Stuart Hall Project* (2013) provides an excellent view of this extraordinary scholar, at the same time also contextualizing several of the themes that were later to be taken up in postcolonial studies.

collapse following the OPEC price hikes of the 1970s and 1980s. This led to major economic migrations from these regions to Europe, North America, and other parts of the global North. There have been more African-born Africans migrating to the United States annually since 1970 than the annual average forcibly transported from the continent for the entire 400-year period of slavery. This extraordinary fact was posted on Barack Obama's campaign website during the Democratic Party presidential nomination contest in 2008 but had previously been given wide circulation from an article by Sam Roberts published in *The New York Times* in 2005 (Roberts 2005).[7] Similar figures may be cited for population movements out of South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean for the same period, all of which are the areas of interest to both Commonwealth and postcolonial literary studies. As we shall see later, the phenomenon of major population dispersals in the contemporary world from the end of the nineteenth century also furnishes the ground for the inception of modern diaspora studies, which provides a new dimension to postcolonialism and may be argued to alter the questions of their mutual relationship to world literature.

Despite the conventional adoption of the 1990s as marking the consolidation of the field of postcolonial studies, it is nevertheless 1983 that must be taken as the totemic date for the deployment of the term in an exclusively nontemporal sense in academic debate. This overlaps in a significant way with the period of critical re-evaluations that were taking place in Commonwealth literature but which at the time were still disconnected from the ferment in literary and cultural studies that had already been marked by the rise in feminism, post-structuralism, and gay and lesbian studies, among others. It was in 1983 that Gayari Spivak, then of the University of Texas at Austin, chaired an MLA panel entitled Colonialist and Postcolonialist Discourse. Her co-panelists were Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, then at the University of Sussex, and William Pietz, who has since left academia to work in green politics and neurocognitive training.[8] Spivak, Said, and Bhabha have long been hailed as furnishing the most significant early theoretical templates for the field of postcolonial studies so that the 1983 MLA panel, coming halfway as it did between the early

7 See also Kandel 2011 and "Profile of Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics 2000: People Born in Africa" (US Census Bureau, Census 2000 Special Tabulations [STP-159]). stp-159-africa-3.pdf.

8 I would like to say a special thanks to David Chioni Moore and Elizabeth De Loughrey, with whom I served on the MLA Postcolonial Committee in 2007, for sharing so generously of the research they and earlier members of the committee had done on the etymology of the term. The year 1983 was suggested as a totemic date by Moore in his introductory remarks at the 2007 MLA panel on "Postcolonial Studies since 1983: Reflective Assessments."

theoretical publications of the 1970s and the consolidation of the field in the 1990s, proved to be seminal. Through much of the 1980s and early 1990s, the work of the Subaltern Studies collective posed serious questions about how postcolonial historiography might be re-thought away from the perspectives of elite formations.[9] Edward Said's idiom of contrapuntalism, which he used as a specific reading practice in *Culture and Imperialism* in 1994, echoes concerns he had developed over a decade earlier in *Orientalism* in 1979 where he insisted on modes of comparison that might encompass the relationship between texts from different backgrounds, and that, more importantly, might help to calibrate our responses to canonical texts and their modes of cultural embedding and circulation (Said 1979, 1993). In *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Said glosses the term contrapuntal as follows:

> [A] musical form . . . employing numerous voices in usually strict imitation of each other, a form, in other words, expressing motion, playfulness, discovery, and, in the rhetorical sense, invention. Viewed this way, the texts of the canonical humanities, far from being a rigid tablet of fixed rules and monuments bullying us from the past . . . will always remain open to changing combinations of sense and signification; every reading and interpretation of a canonical work re-animates it in the present, furnishes an occasion for rereading, allows the modern and the new to be situated in a broad historical field whose usefulness is that it shows us history as an agonistic process still being made, rather than finished and settled once and for all. (Said and Bilgrami 2004: 25)

Said, Spivak, and Bhabha were as much interested in discursive ensembles as they were in the literature that was produced during and after the colonial period. However, the colonial discourse analysis that was inaugurated by Said and others also had its roots in earlier accounts of decolonization.[10] Thus the shift in the perception of the literary historical context that became prominent in early postcolonial criticism had been suggested by Albert Memmi, Aimé Césaire, C. L. R. James, Frantz Fanon, and others since the 1950s. Aimé Césaire had outlined the earliest form of colonial discourse analysis in his monumental *Discourse on Colonialism* in 1950; Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* was published in 1957, while Frantz Fanon had already been highlighting the fraught psycho-existential process of decolonization with *Black Skin, White Masks* in 1952, *A Dying Colonialism* in 1959, and *Wretched of the Earth* in 1961.

9 For an overview of the work of the Subaltern Studies group, see Guha 1997.

10 Said, Spivak, and Bhabha each provide insightful examples of colonial discourse analysis, but perhaps the most elaborate and thorough is that provided by Ranajit Guha's "The Prose of Counterinsurgency" (1984).

And C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins* (1938) has now been recognized as a major work of postcolonial literary and cultural criticism. With these offerings and the new challenge of contrapuntalism that was focalized by Edward Said's work, increasing concerns with the material and political conditions for thinking about literature came to the fore in postcolonial studies that came to affect the nature of comparison and the conceptualization of world literature.

Diaspora, Deterritorialization, and World Literature

We noted earlier how it was the major movements of populations from the global South to the global North that added to the ferment of race riots in the USA and the UK to provide the impetus for social reform and the rise of postcolonial studies. The rise of postcolonial studies also concomitantly led to an increase in arguments for reform of the humanities and literary curriculum in general. One direction from which the entire idea of the literary corpus and of comparison has been problematized in postcolonial studies is from the perspective of diasporic literature. In diasporic literature the central element placed in the foreground is the experience of spatial discontinuities, whether this is represented directly in the traumatic departure from a homeland and the difficult attempts at devising new forms of identity in the land of sojourn, such as we find in, say, Amy Tan's *Joy Luck Club* and Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*, or, as is also frequently the case, in the enigmas of arrival and sojourn, as we find in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, Junot Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, among others.

Deleuze and Guattari proposed the term deterritorialization as a way of illustrating the status of Franz Kafka's writing as a form of minor literature. Minor writing was for them more a modality of writing than the marker of ethnic difference. They understood minor literature to be less a specific literary genre than "the revolutionary conditions of all literature in the midst of that which we call grand (or established) [literature]" (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 33). When a minor literature is written in a hegemonic language, the language must undergo a process of deterritorialization in order to alienate it from its familiar ruses of power. At a minimum, the term deterritorialization implies that the writer of minor literature alienates the dominant language from within its own discourse, either by intensifying its metaphorical registers or by paring it down to the barest expressive minimum. Joyce and Beckett exemplify the two poles of intensification and paring down for

the two philosophers, even though from a postcolonial perspective one might think of Salman Rushdie and J. M. Coetzee as representing the two contrasting representational poles.

Further to his book with Guattari on Kafka, Deleuze asserts in *Essays Critical and Clinical* that language is power-laden and that its purpose is not just communication, but the affirmation of slogans, watchwords, and "words of order" that guarantee the dominant modes of defining and organizing the world. What minor writers do in the face of this reality is to create a foreignness in language that "is not a different language nor a discovered patois, but a *becoming-other* of the language, a minoritization of that major language, a delirium that carries it away, a sorcerer's line that escapes the dominant system" (Deleuze 1997, emphasis added). For as Deleuze goes on to note, the recognition of this enjoins a necessary process of becoming that applies to all minor and denigrated entities within society. These denigrated entities have historically included women, racial minorities, aborigines, the disabled, and people of different sexual orientations. And yet the concept of becoming is not coterminous with that of coming-into-being or emergence, even though there is clearly an overlap with them. Rather, as Roland Bogue glosses the term, becoming is "a passage between things, a decoding that proceeds via a mutative interaction with the stigmatized term of a binary power relation" (1997: 109).

If minority literature achieves its effects through modes of deterritorialization, then it is the diasporic condition that most expresses its condition of possibility. As Daniel Colucciello Barber notes, diaspora splits the self between integrity and discontinuity in the sense not just of having to move from one location to another, but in that of being compelled to participate of two locations at the same time. He puts it succinctly: "With diaspora there is no integrated discourse to be served; integrity resides not prior to but within diasporic disintegration (or within the differential forms produced in diaspora)." Or, more precisely, "diaspora proceeds by imagining a positive, mutually constitutive relation between... imperatives and thus accedes to a process of interparticular decomposition and recomposition" (Barber 2011: 56–57). Nine of the thirteen Nobel Literature Prize-winners from the global South either are based in countries other than their own or have written substantially on the subject of diaspora or mobility. These include Toni Morrison, Derek Walcott, V. S. Naipaul, J. M. Coetzee, Orhan Parmuk, Doris Lessing, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Kazuo Ishiguro.[11] This is not to

11 Postcolonial winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature since the 1980s: Gabriel García Márquez (1982), Wole Soyinka (1986), Naguib Mahfouz (1988), Octavio Paz (1990), Nadine Gordimer (1991), Toni Morrison (1993), Derek Walcott (1992), V. S. Naipaul

mention Salman Rushdie, Amos Oz, Chimamanda Adichie, Ingolo Mbue, or Junot Diaz, who are perhaps among the most widely read writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. What all these writers share in common is the representation of the condition of being out-of-place as the product of geographical or other forms of displacement. Whether in the genres of children's stories, folktales, biblical accounts of the enigmas of rupture and arrival (The Book of Exodus), the *yizker bikher* or memorial books of the shtetls, or in the literary writings of the writers we have just noted, the diasporic imaginary is encapsulated in a set of complex relationships between form, content, and affective economies. Three elements that are central to the diasporic imaginary in literature are place, nostalgia, and what I want to term genealogical accounting. While it must be acknowledged that the categories of place and nostalgia are not exclusive to the diasporic imaginary, genealogical accounting must be taken as constitutive. Furthermore, it must be noted that it is the overall configuration of all these elements that allows us to establish the contours of the diasporic imaginary and to see how they reveal a world literary aspect.[12]

Within the diasporic imaginary the question of identity ("who am I") is necessarily entangled with that of place ("what is this place, and how does it affect who I am?"). This recalls to mind Barber's point about the dialectical relationship in diaspora between integrity and discontinuity. Apart from the fact that for the diasporic, *this* place is always in some form of dialectical relation to *that place* and to an *elsewhere*, the dialectical relation may in certain instances produce breaches in the commonplace, an *unheimlich* of place, as it were. The *unheimlich* or unhomeliness of place is undergirded by the fraught dynamic of the links between ideas of homeland and land of sojourn that take as their theater the *mind of the beholder* (i.e., the diasporic individual or community) in negotiating their present. Overlapping markedly with the concept of space, diasporic nostalgia nonetheless turns out to be a much more elusive concept. What makes nostalgia relevant for our world literary configuration, however, is the fact that it is intimately tied to a sense of displacement, and that this displacement is foundational to the constitution of diasporic identity. And yet nostalgia for the homeland is not simply a desire for the territorial integrity of the land that has been departed from or indeed for the features of geography or landscape that mark it off as different in the mind of the diasporic. As Marxist critics such as Henri Lefebvre, David

(2001), J. M. Coetzee (2003), Doris Lessing (2007), Orhan Parmuk (2006), Mario Vargas Llosa (2010), Kazuo Ishiguro (2017).

12 For further elaboration of these concepts, see Quayson and Daswani 2013.

Harvey, and Doreen Massey have taught us, space is no mere container but rather the simultaneous producer and symptom of social relations. It is the social relations enabled by a particular place that triggers nostalgia for that place. And these social relations are extended in diaspora such that what constitutes neighborly proximity is complicated by the fact that your "neighbor" may be as much a co-ethnic diasporic in a completely different country, as they are the person that lives at the address right next to you. In the age of social media, neighborliness has itself undergone major transformation such that we may end up speaking to a cousin in another country more often than we speak to the milkman or newspaper vendor on the street of our diasporic sojourn.

Genealogical accounting involves questions of ancestry, ethnicity, tradition, and culture and provides a distinguishing past to the person or community. Almost without fail, genealogical accounting involves stories of the "how-we-got-here" variety, sometimes with detailed descriptions of the journey itself. The "we" in the formulation is not limited exclusively to the nuclear family unit but encompasses the stories of other figures such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and an extensive panoply of relations and acquaintances. Thus, genealogical accounting also produces a nexus of affiliations such that the fate of one person is seen to be inextricably tied to the fate of all others of the same group. Since family provides the primary set of affective relationships for the individual, it is genealogical accounting that provides the link between the individual and the entire community of co-ethnics, whether in the same location or further afield. The genealogical accounting sometimes performs the function of quest motif, where discovery is meant to restore the diasporic to a form of epistemological certainty about their identity. The form of the quest is rarely, if at all, pre-given but has to be unearthed through acts of attentiveness and labor. The quest thematic of genealogical accounting is what we see in "Paul Bereyter," a short story in W. G. Sebald's *The Emigrants*, while in *Interpreter of Maladies* Jhumpa Lahiri mediates the theme through the eyes of a bewildered Indian child watching the drama of the violent birth of Bangladesh unfold on TV with her family and their Pakistani guest in "Mr Prizada Came to Dine." The detailing of the journey and the stories of how-we-got-here also perform the formal mnemonic function of defining the conceptual distance between diasporics and the non-diasporics with whom they are required to interact. Finally, genealogical accounting introduces a form of ethical imperative that is incorporated into the recognition of the past and its impact on the present. Sometimes, as in the Jewish tradition of the Pesach prayer, the ethical imperative is incorporated as

a central aspect of the ritual recall of the passage from the homeland into exile.

The move from nation-and-narration to diasporic imaginary can be noted in every society that has had its writers write both within the nation-state and in exile. Sometimes the two are coterminous within the same body of writing. Samuel Beckett's writing while he was in self-imposed exile in Paris was either tinged with a diasporic nostalgia for Ireland as in *Murphy*, abjured any direct reference to any particular country or indeed place, as in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, or combined both nostalgia and placelessness, as in *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*.[13] For writers such as Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie, Taiye Selassie, Ingolo Mbue, NoViolet Bulawayo, and others in the new cohort of African writers, the question of the relationship between diaspora and nostalgia is answered through what appears to be an unresolvable contradiction. In the first place, the African abroad, such as Adichie's Ifemelu in *Americanah* or NoViolet Bulawayo's Darling in *We Need New Names*, is keen to establish firm distinctions between themselves and the other racialized others they encounter in the West. For Adichie, this is done through the handy chronotope of the hair-braiding salon, which allows Ifemelu to reflect on the different kinds of exigencies that affect the identities of Africans abroad, their African-American cousins, and various other racial minorities that come in and out of the hair-braiding salon in which she is sitting to have her hair done, as though going through a gallery of diasporic character types. In NoViolet Bulawayo's novel, the urge to differentiation is shown most sharply when Darling mocks her friend Kristal for not knowing how to write and speak "proper English" but only Ebonics. The haughtiness of this dismissal of her African-American friend is only one of the ways in which Darling tries to preserve her sense of distinctive Africanness. The point of these depictions is to carefully differentiate between a person rooted in an authentic African heritage from any other racialized beings they encounter in the diaspora. When genealogical accountings are proffered in such novels, they are done so as to demonstrate that the African in the diaspora has deep roots elsewhere, that is to say, in their countries of origin. And yet, the urge toward differentiation is not done to assert an unproblematic relationship to the homeland either, for the Lagos of *Americanah* and the Bulawayo of *We Need New Names* are riven through with all manner of contradictions and social catastrophes: inordinate

13 Patrick Bixby also points out that "Vladimir and Estragon hail from a long lineage of Irish vagrants," and thus have more than a passing resemblance to Molloy, Malone, and Moran, all of whom kick clear of institutions, extirpate domestic roots, and resolve to roam the countryside (2009).

and suffocating vehicular traffic, political violence and corruption, AIDs, rapacious Christianity, and a whole list of other social inequities and disjunctures.[14] The relationship to the homeland is thus not untrammeled by ambiguity, such that what we find in such novels is that the diasporic African is essentially divided between nostalgic attachment and cosmopolitan citizenship. This contradiction is not necessarily new or even exclusive to diasporic Africans given every region of the world now has examples of displaced persons split between nostalgia and identification. What is new, however, is the impulse toward distinguishing their place in relation to the racial economy of the West, a racial economy that denominates differential social locations for Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans in relation to the hegemonic order of white privilege. The deterritorialization we see in such instances is quite different from what we might discern in Zadie Smith, or Amy Tan, or even Samuel Beckett, for that matter. But it is the decentering of identity that now derives not from an experience of existential homelessness, as was the case for say Meursault in Albert Camus's *The Stranger* or Radion Raskolnikov in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, both of which are unquestionable classics of world literature. In diasporic texts the estrangement is the effect of the biographical discontinuity that is the direct product of displacement.

If deterritorialization is a defining mark of minor literature, it is also central to diasporic writing as an inalienable feature of its ambiguation of identity between place, nostalgia, and genealogical accounting. But what happens to Borges's library of Babel when we read it from the perspective of diaspora? To accomplish this shift, we will have to re-read the library away from the foundational contradiction it encapsulates for Borges between the logic of typology and the enigmas of proliferation and rather see the library as the objective correlative of the motif of circulation. The motif of circulation already automatically inheres in the circulation desk of a public library for this has always been a firm aspect of its chronotope. Even though in the electronic era the tasks of the circulation desk have been transferred online, anytime we access our library's online portal we are reinvoking that key chronotopic function. But the library of babel must now also be read as symbolic of the translation and transfers between places and times, for now we come to the library cognizant that it also encapsulates the very essence of the condition of human circulation in its materiality and history as well as in

14 Indeed, in one of the first reviews of NoViolet Bulawayo's novel, Nigerian writer Helon Habila accuses her of pandering to a Western desire for poverty porn (2013). For fascinating comments on the culture of cars in *Americanah* and the symbolic role played by Lagos's traffic congestion in the novel, see Green-Simms 2016: 1–30.

its phenomenology. The library of Babel thus represents the residue of our restlessness as we quest for a home in the world. And whether we stay at one place, change countries and climes, or simply remain at one place while dreaming of another, the library documents the character of circulation in its form as well as in its diverse contents. What I am suggesting here is not the same as a reading of the colonial archive-as-library, where the Other is denominated and emplaced as subsidiary or supplemental to the hegemonic order, if also an inescapable necessity. Rather, what is being proffered is a postcolonial reading of the library that sees it as the very chronotope of displacement, desire, and the endless quest for a place in the world. And in this way, the contrapuntalism that Said spoke of becomes not just an option among many for reflecting upon world literature, but the very enabling premise of our understanding in the first place.

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The Indian Republic, Reading Publics, and World Literary Catalogues

B. VENKAT MANI

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, *The Bhagavad Gita*,[1] an important literary work and Hindu religious scripture, became the flashpoint of a cultural and political debate in India. In December 2014, a few months into the coming to power of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), there was a sudden push to recognize the *Gita* as the "national scripture" (Rāshṭrīya Grantha) (HT Correspondent 2014). The call for this recognition came from (the late) Sushma Swaraj (1952–2019), lawyer, politician, and from 2014 to 2019 the External Affairs minister of India. Swaraj, who in May 2014 took her oath as a minister in Sanskrit (Times of India Videos 2014), made her statement at an event organized by a Hindu right-wing outfit marking the "5,151st anniversary" of the *Gita* (HT Correspondent 2014). In the months following Swaraj's statement, the chief minister of Haryana, a state that borders the capital, New Delhi, went one step further by asking all Indians to accept the *Gita* as "the constitution" of India (Kaushika 2014). The justification for this urgent need to nationalize a Hindu scripture in a multi-religious, multilingual, and multicultural nation, and even to have it replace the constitution of India, was tied to Prime Minster Narendra Modi's use of the *Gita* as a diplomatic gift to world leaders (Som 2014). The gift of the *Gita* was not one-directional. Tulsi Gabbard, US Representative (DNC) from Hawaii's second congressional district, and presidential hopeful for 2020 US presidential elections, had presented her own personal copy of the work to Modi when she visited India in 2014 (ANI 2019).

The *Gita* was never officially recognized as the national scripture of India. Nonetheless, in early 2019, the government of Haryana spent 318,000 Indian

1 Of the many transliterations of this work, as also attested in the bibliography, I am using the simplest one, *The Bhagavad Gita*, as used by Richard Davis in his monograph (2014). In the rest of the text, I will refer to the work as *Gita*, as it is commonly referred to in India.

rupees (roughly 4,500 USD) to produce ten expensive copies of the text ("Haryana Govt."). Across the Indian Ocean, a festival of the *Gita* ("Gita Mahotsava") was held in the Republic of Mauritius, a former French colony and today an island nation populated primarily by descendants of Indian indentured laborers who were sent to work in sugar plantations in the nineteenth century. The government of Mauritius funded this festival and invited the chief minister of Haryana to preside. In his speech, the minister explained to Mauritian Hindus the greatness of the *Gita* that tied them to "homelands" that their ancestors left two centuries ago (Government Information Service 2019).

What could a short-lived controversy surrounding a text that was first composed around the second century BCE tell us about world literature in India in the twenty-first century CE? Before answering the question, let me provide some notes on the *Gita*'s multiple journeys from the cultural-linguistic space of its inception to the larger world.

The *Gita*, which Richard D. Davis in his "biography" of the text aptly describes as a text that touches on "ethical dilemmas, religious practices and philosophical issues" (2014), is a highly regarded work from India among discerning readers of Indian literatures. The work's entry into the Western literary sphere was facilitated by British colonialism and German orientalism. The first English translation was published in 1785 by Charles Wilkins (Wilkins and East India Company 1785), who, along with William Jones, was one of the founding members of the Asiatick Society of Bengal. In 1823, five years before Goethe made his famous statement on *Weltliteratur* (1828), the German orientalist Friedrich Wilhelm von Schlegel translated the work into Latin; an improved and edited version with the Norwegian orientalist Christian Lassen's help was published in 1846 (Schlegel 1823). Annie Besant, Irish intellectual and member of the Theosophical Society, published a new translation entitled *The Lord's Song* in 1896 (Besant 1896). Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford (1936–52) and later the second president of independent India (1962–67), published the first comprehensive English translation with a commentary in 1948 (Radhakrishnan 1948). Apart from a very long trajectory of commentaries and retellings in several Indian languages, well-known readers of the work around the world included Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Aldous Huxley (Davis), as well as Hermann Hesse, and the former Turkish president Bülent Ecevit. The *Gita* also forms part of the lived culture of many Hindus; in the weeks following the death of a person, the surviving members of the

family perform a ritualistic reading of the work, either privately, or in community. I count myself among the readers of this great text.

With such a rich body of national and worldwide readers of the *Gita*, the iconic gift of the text from an Indian premier to a foreign dignitary would hardly be considered controversial. However, something else was at stake here: the reduction of multiplicity to singularity.

From a nationalist-populist leader who thrives on Hindu majoritarianism, to a government that wants to appease descendants of indentured laborers from the nineteenth century, a majority of whom happened to be Hindus, to a member of a religious minority in the United States with a migrant background: from the Indian to the Pacific Ocean, *Gita* emerged as the sole *native*, *indigenous* Indian text that the world should read. Representatives of the state turned into the agents of the work's circulation and dissemination in foreign lands. By assuring the *Gita*'s dissemination into the world as the "national holy scripture," from India to the USA and to Mauritius – in three democratic republics – elected members of national and regional parliaments actively staked their claims in turning a religious-literary work into the most representative work of a national canon. The multilingual, multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-religious catalogue of literatures from India was reduced to one book: the *Gita*.

What is the role of the state in the business of national and world literatures? This question is central to this chapter, in which I want to revive the multiplicity of India's literary catalogue to think through its implications for the term "world literature." The main aim of this chapter is to articulate the relationship between literary catalogues and their creation of readerships, especially when the said relationship is mediated by the state. I propose that the catalogues of national and, by extension, world literature become politically and ideology inflected, sometimes through facilitation, other times through obstruction by the state and its ancillaries. I further argue in this chapter that through differentiations of the native and the foreign, the indigenous and the migrant – often propagated through majoritarian myths of national origins – the state functions to privilege certain languages and literatures over others by claims of ownership of certain literary traditions and rejection of others. In addition, I also provide examples of ways in which populist conflations of the indigenous with the original are offered resistance.

The source of these ideas is the theoretical framework that I developed in my book *Recoding World Literature* (Mani 2017), which centralizes the idea of "bibliomigrancy" (33–37) – the physical and virtual migration of books – to study the "coding" of literary works as national literary artifacts, and their

"recoding" as world literature (12). In the book, bibliomigrancy is offered as the conduit that helps us give an account of the historical conditioning, cultural determination, and political charge of world literature. The proliferation of world literature in a society is a reflection of its relationship with print culture: its "pact with books" (38–39). Through a two-century-long engagement with German print cultural and library histories, I trace the transformation of the world literary catalogue for national and worldwide readerships.

In this chapter, however, instead of simply projecting the German model on to the Indian one, my effort is to underline the multiplicity of the Indian literary catalogue and its readerships. Instead of a grand historical survey, which will be beyond the scope of this short chapter, I want to draw attention to three "bibliographic" moments in the changing pact with books of the Indian reading publics. My attempt is to showcase the plurality inherent in world literary catalogues – for the Indian readerships, and for those worldwide – a plurality that actively defies the singularity forwarded by current trends of organic nativist politics.

I begin in the late nineteenth century. Through a reading of Lālā Śrīnivāsadāsa's (Das) Hindi novel *Parīkśā Gurū* (1882), I discuss a moment of the very transformation of the so-called indigenous and the bridging of the indigenous and the foreign. More specifically, I focus on modes through which print cultural developments in colonial (northern) India led to the growth of new literary forms such as the novel, which proactively practiced local appropriation and adaptations of "foreign" literary forms, creating new readerships. I then briefly turn to the post-Independence period. I locate the Hindi poet Mahādevī Varmā (Varma)'s statement on world literature in the moment when a catalogue of Indian literature for the world was also being prepared under the commission of UNESCO. This brief section serves as a bridge leading to the current moment. The chapter ends in the twenty-first century with a discussion on the launch of a new publication series for Indic literatures in English translation in the United States, and a controversial petition launched against it by Hindu right-wing intellectuals in India and abroad.

Indian "National" and "World Literatures": A Print Cultural Primer

The position of Indian literature in the larger world literary sphere has garnered much attention recently, especially since the resurgence of

discussions and debates around the term world literature in the twenty-first century. Central to these discussions are two main themes: the multilingual composition of literary traditions housed under the larger umbrella "Indian," and the late-twentieth-century rise to prominence of English literature from India in the world. In his Introduction to *What Is World Literature?* (2003), for example, David Damrosch thinks of India as a "cultural system" (26). For Damrosch, the "norms and needs of a culture" shape the modes in which literary works enter into the cultural space as world literature. In the Indian context, Damrosch further states, what acquires particular relevance are the "dual contexts of the multiplicity of India's disparate languages and the ongoing presence of English in post-Raj India" (26). For Vinay Dharwadker, in twentieth-century India, *Viśva Sāhityā*, the Sanskrit-Hindi term for world literature, is "at once world literature, universal literature, universalistic literature, and cosmopolitan literature" (2014: 477), even though until the eighteenth century, there was "no room for elements originating outside the Bharatvarsha [Bhāratavarṣā], the conceptually closed geographical and cultural realm of what we now call the Indian subcontinent" (476). Dharwadker credits this shift to the "large-scale material or infrastructural transformation centered on the print-medium," which he further connects with the arrival of the printing press in the first half-century of British colonial power (476).

In contrast, Aamir Mufti, in *Forget English* (2016), traces the origins of world literature – in the West, and in the Indian subcontinental context – in orientalism. Mufti claims that *"world literature has functioned from the very beginning as a border regime"* (9, original emphasis). The process of construction of national literature, and its perception within the world literary space, Mufti compellingly demonstrates, is also connected to a clear demarcation of borders. The indigenization of Sanskrit literary works as "Indian" classics (115–19) – in which German thinkers had an important role to play – served to position the majority "Hindu" literary works against Farsi, Arabic, and later Urdu literatures, which were erroneously presented as languages of the large Muslim minority (120–28). The divisions between Hindi and Urdu in northern India, "invented for the purpose of colonial governance" (128), deepened with the rise of national consciousness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, finally resulting in the bloody partition of the subcontinent along geo-linguistic, geo-religious lines. Orientalist classicism/classicist Anglicism, while disavowing literary quality to "any literatures of India or Arabia," as Macaulay famously stated in 1835, managed to create a lasting legacy of epistemic violence. British colonial pedagogy, which politicized the classrooms of Fort William College (Calcutta) and the Delhi College, in many

ways laid the foundation for the global anglophone novel as the primary representative of Indian or Pakistani works in the world literary catalogue.

A world literary catalogue, as I also discuss in *Recoding World Literature*, is not a neutral, alphabetically arranged list of literary works. It is a politically charged inventory of literary works from a national literary space available in translation to a worldwide reading public, and from foreign literary spaces available to a national reading public. Given that national literary spaces are marked by majority and minority, dominant and subjugated languages and literary traditions, akin to national literary catalogues, world literary catalogues too carry over multiple struggles of representation of marginalized and minoritized languages and literatures. The political charge of a world literary catalogue is particularly relevant in multilingual locations such as the Indian subcontinent, in which the languages of those in power became dominant over the course of history. Whether it was Sanskrit in the premodern era (Pollock 2006), Persian during the Mughal period (Alam 2004), or English during the British Raj (Vishwanathan 1989; Ahmad 1992; Suleri 1992), patronage of these languages and the promotion of translations from and into these languages were hugely impacted by structures of power. These power hierarchies were then carried over to European world literary catalogues, through some of the first translation series of the nineteenth century such as those published by the Oriental Translation Fund (Mani 2017: 77–79), and anthologies of world literatures such as Johannes Scherr's *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* (1848) (Mani 2017: 109–11). *Mirrorworks* (1997), the controversial anthology of Indian literature for the world in which Salman Rushdie reduced literatures from India in the post-Independence period to literature written in English (with the exception of one Urdu author, Saadat Hasan Manto), was as politically charged as the confinement of all literatures from India to the *Gita*.

Given this history of spectral effects of colonialism – which created tensions between indigenization of the foreign and foreignization of the indigenous – it is hardly a surprise that the sense of the "national" in literary production in India in the late nineteenth century develops because of, and often in entanglement with, the conceptual imagination of the world.

In her introduction to *The Making of Modern Hindi* (2018), Sujata Mody examines the "politics and processes of making Hindi modern at a formative moment in India's History" (xv). Citing practices of colonial authorities to enumerate and classify populations, mapping and surveying lands, investments in civic infrastructure, Mody points out that "Educational reforms and the introduction of mass printing technologies increased literacy rates among

Indians and engineered a shift from traditional reading cultures patronized by royalty to larger reading publics" (xv). Mody further connects these developments in the colonial state's management of its subjects and the proliferation of literacy through the rise of print culture to the development of new forms of print: magazines, newspapers, as well as new literary genres. The most dominant influences in these forms, states Mody, came from "classical Sanskrit prose and the modern English novel" (179), notable in the "overlap in Hindi of modern genres of prose fiction derived from Western literary traditions, namely the short story and the novel" (179). Mody's thoughts on the overlap of modern genres of prose fiction in Hindi are independently echoed by Jennifer Dubrow in the context of Urdu novels. In *Cosmopolitan Dreams* (2018), Dubrow presents Urdu as a transregional language in the nineteenth century and traces the birth of the "Urdu cosmopolis" in infrastructural changes such as "the spread of lithography, a print technology invented and brought to India in the early nineteenth century, and by the proliferating railway and telegraph lines" (xx).[2]

To summarize, there are three aspects that surface in varied ways in discussions of Indian national and world literatures: first, the interactions between the local and the extra-local cultural space; second, the facilitation of such interaction through print and other forms of technology; and third, the indigenization of the foreign to produce new literary forms during the colonial and the postcolonial period in multilingual locations. The presence of these aspects in the formation of a world literary catalogue in the late nineteenth century informs my discussion of *Parīkśā Gurū*, considered to be (one of) the first Hindi novels.

Instead of locating the novel solely within the Indian or the Hindi literary traditions, I want to present it as a novel of dual mediation: of the indigenous and the foreign, the national and the worldly. Reading, translation, and reading *in* translation become essential to the creation of this novel. The novelist mediates world literature to the readers, as he very consciously

2 Mody and Dubrow's observations stand in sharp contrast to a compact essay on the position of Hindi literature, published in a recent volume, entitled *Bhāratīyā Sāhitya kī Pahacāna* (The Identity of Indian Literature). In his essay on Hindi literature, Dr. Mukteshwarnath Tiwari, listed as the head of the Hindi department at Shanti-Niketan, the university started by the Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, presents the development of Hindi literature through famous and already recognized names rather than the larger context. While Tiwari recognizes the significance of the rise of magazines in the development of modern Hindi, there is no connection between how the import not just of technologies but also the readership of texts played a role in the development of a new language and its new forms, which is how I want to read the worldliness of the first Hindi novel.

creates a local world literary readership in Hindi. The dominant presence of translation – linguistic, genre-based, and political – in the novel, combined with a hyperconscious awareness of its place within reading culture accentuate the "foreignness" of this work, even as it simultaneously engages with the native language and literary forms.

Parīkśā Gurū (1882) as a Catalogue of World Literature

> Until now many different kinds of good books have been prepared in Nagari and Urdu, but to my knowledge, none has been written in this fashion. Therefore in our language this will be a book of a new trend.[3]

These are the opening lines of the preface to *Parīkśā Gurū* (The Tutelage of the Trial),[4] written and published in 1882 by the Delhi-based author Das (1851–88). The central theme of this novel is high-end consumerism among the top 1 percent of Indian businessmen, who are participants in, and recipients of, the global consumption of goods and capital at the end of the nineteenth century. The protagonist Lālā Madan Lāla is a successful businessman and entrepreneur in Delhi. He belongs to the class of people who work closely with the British, either through direct financial investments in the infrastructural expansion of the Raj – the construction of railways, bridges, roads etc. – or make their fortunes by contracts to supply raw materials or human power. In other words, Madana Lāla belongs to the class that can afford to buy imported luxury goods such as crystal chandeliers from Belgium, Portuguese tiles, Chinese dinnerware, and Western-style silverware made by British jewelers in India. He also represents the generation of businessmen who are trained in Farsi for their interactions with the last vestiges of the Mughal court, as well as in English to carry on business with the new state officials in power, even as they use Hindi/Urdu/Punjabi in their interactions with local northern Indians, and Kaithī – the linguistic system developed by the Kayastha caste – for keeping their accounts. The novel documents Madana Lāla's consumption and corruption – a combination of Indian and Western decadence – which leads him to the point of

3 "Aba taka Nāgarī aura Urdu meiṃ sneka taraha kī acchī, acchī pustakeṃ taiyāra ho cukī haiṃ, parantu mere jāna isa rīti se koī nahīṃ likhī gayī, isaliye apanī bhāshā meiṃ yaha naī cāla kī pustaka hogi." (Das 1974: 12).

4 The Sanskrit/Hindi word *Pariksha* means a test, exam, or trial. *Guru* means both teacher and also something that is great or big. Kalsi translates the title of the novel as *Experience Is the Only Teacher* (1992: 763). I am using Vasudha Dalmia's translation, which I think captures the gist of the novel and the title most appropriately. (2017: 232).

bankruptcy. He is saved in the end by the efforts of his lawyer friend Lālā Brija Kiśora. The testing circumstances lead to Madana Lāla's melodramatic transformation at the end of the novel, hence the title, *The Tutelage of the Trial*.

With the exception of one critic, Gopala Raya (Raya 1965: 212–16; 1968: 365), scholars and literary historians writing in Hindi as well as English (Kalsi 1992; Dalmia 2008, 2017; Mukherjee 2007) recognize *Parīkśā Gurū* as the first Hindi novel. The novel has not been discussed explicitly in a world literary framework, especially, as I intend to do, as a novel of translation that combines the indigenous with the foreign to produce wonderfully hybrid outcomes. Extant scholarship has only sparsely discussed the novel's preface, which is hyperconscious of the novelty of the form, and, as we shall see, a clear attempt at carving out a space for an extra-local genre for which there exist no local readers.

The advent of the Hindi novel on the Indian literary scene coincides with the mass proliferation of print in Urdu and Hindi. While the Serampore Baptist Missionary press, which published books in Hindi, was set up in the Danish colony near Calcutta (Kolkata) in 1800, and the first Sanskrit Press was launched in Calcutta in 1810 by Lallu jī Lāla, it would take about thirty-two years for the first Hindi presses to open in the Hindi-speaking belt of northern India. Between 1834 and 1856, around ten publishing houses were established in Agra, Mirzapur, Benaras, Allahabad, Lucknow, etc., most famous of them being the Naval Kishore Press, established in Lucknow in 1858. Between 1850 and 1867, about twenty new Hindi newspapers were launched (Orsini 2017; Mody 2018; Dharwadker 2014: 477).

It was not merely the proliferation of printing presses and Hindi newspapers and magazines that was slowly creating conditions for the rise of the novel. The translation of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Bangla Novel *Durgeśa Nandinī* (1865) into Hindi is reported to have been very popular. In addition, the first Hindi translations of English novels appeared on the market in 1860: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as *Robinsana Krūso kā Itihāsa*, and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as *Yātrā Svapnodaya* (Kalsi 1992: 764; Mukherjee 2007).

The novelist Das acknowledges this heritage in theory and practice. In the self-published first edition, Das dedicates the book to the reading public, stating, in English, "My Humble Attempt at Novel Writing." As a novelist he is conscious of the newness of the form for the Hindi readers. Readers must therefore be helped, and Das is willing to oblige. In the preface, he distinguishes other forms of storytelling from novel writing:

> In the beginning, the readers will be confused to read the account of the merchant. So far the conversational tales written in our language have told the stories of the hero and the heroine in a sequential manner, "such as there was a son of a king, an emperor, a rich man, or the son of a businessman. . .a certain incident roused his interest in a certain thing and the result of which was such." . . . But if the reader will go through the whole book patiently, he will find every secret revealed at its opportune moment and every piece will fall into place from the beginning to the end. Those who fail to keep their patience will not be able to understand even the meaning of this.[5]

But how should the readers keep their patience if there is no order and no clear distinction between voices, such as in a play? For this, Das provides a helpful guide to understand the composition of a paragraph and the signs used to distinguish sentences, thoughts, and emotions:

> If the statement by a person is mostly not completed in a paragraph but somewhere in someone's statement some other subjects come up, without finishing the first statement within this sign " (inverted commas) from the beginning to the end of the second paragraph with the use of this sign " the same statement is continued…and among the signs this one , (comma), a short pause with ; (semi-colon) or : (colon) or this sign . (fullstop) for a complete pause, or this ? (interrogation) in the place of a question or this ! (exclamation) surprise. . .are written. [6]

The print cultural protocol and the form of the novel might be new to the reader and the novelist. But the tradition of reading itself is not. And this is where the last sections of the Preface anticipate the world literary borrowings that the reader is about to discover in the novel:

> In composing this book, *Mahabharat* etc. [in] Sanskrit, *Gulistan* etc. [in] Farsi, old articles by Spectator, Lord Bacon, Goldsmith, William Cowper etc., and the contemporary journals with women's consciousness as their subject have greatly helped me, and therefore I very much acknowledge their

5 Pahale to paṛhne vale isa pustaka meiṃ saudāgara kā hāla paṛhte hī cakarāvenge kyoṃkī apanī bhāshā meiṃ aba taka vārtārūpī jopustakeiṃ likhī gayī haiṃ uname aksara nāyaka nāyikā vagairaha kā hāla silasilevāra likhā gayā hai "jaise koī rājā, badaśaha, seṭha, sāhukār kā laṛkā thā usaka mana meiṃ isa bāta se yaha rucī huī aura isakā yaha pariṇāma nikalā." . . . Hālāṃkī paṛhne vale dhairya se saba pustaka paṛha lenge to apane apane mauke parasaba bheda khultā calā jāyegā aura ādi se anta taka saba mela mila jāyegā. Parantu jo sāhiba itanā dhairya nā rakhenge vaha isaka matalaba bhī nahiṃ samajha sakenge. (Das 1974: 12–13)

6 Eka ādamī kā vacana bahuta karake eka pairāgrāfa meiṃ pūrā hotā hai para kahiṃ kahiṃ kisi kisi ke vacana meiṃ aura aura vishaya ā jāte haiṃ to aise cinha " (inverted commas) meiṃ pahala vacana pūrā kiye binā dūsare pairāgrāfa ke ādi se aise " cinha lagākara usī kā vacana jārī rakhā jātā hai . . . aura cinhoṃ meiṃ aisā , (comma), kincita viśrāma aisā ; (semicolon) athavā : (colon) ardhaviśrāma, aisā . (fullstop) pūrṇaviśrāma, aisā ? (interrogation) praśna kī jagaha aisā ! (exclamation) āścarya athavā . . . likha dete haiṃ. (13–14).

beneficence, and further acknowledging the unconditional benevolence of the merciful almighty God, I end this article.[7]

In fact, Das mentions that the book "translates poetry from Sanskrit, Farsi, and English in the verse of our language, but because of the difficulty that ensues due to difference in the rules and the manners of verse in other countries, in some instances, instead of a complete translation (*pūrā tarjumā*) just the gist has been taken."[8]

Starting with this framing, the entire novel becomes a library catalog of world literary works and world historical events, translated for the Hindi reader. Lālā Brijakiśora, the good friend in need and deed, becomes the agent of this world literary mediation. Shakespeare, William Cowper (119), Alexander Pope (140), Lord Byron (163) appear alongside Farsi authors such as Sheikh Saadi (187), and Braj and Awadhi poets such as Kabir (57), Gang (167), and Vrind (87); tales from *The 1001 Nights* are woven together with excerpts from Sanskrit classics such as *Hitopadesha* (61); passages from *Manusmriti* (43), Valmiki's *Ramayana* (70), *Vishupurana* (153), *Viduraniti* (98), *Nalopakhyana* (92), and *Gita* coexist with excerpts from the Qurʾān, and the Bible; poetic forms such as *dohā*, *soraṭhā*, and *caupāi* are deployed for translating *śera*, *śloka*, and sonnets.

Parikśā Gūru is important not merely because it is one of the first Hindi novels but because it is important as a polyvocal, multilingual text. In addition, it is a quintessentially nineteenth-century novel, which acquires its worldliness through its regionalism or locality. The hardship – or the luxury – of the epic hero's serendipitous journey is no longer available to the bourgeois hero of the nineteenth-century novel. It is the novel of an age in which the protagonist does not need not travel to different parts of the world in order to compose and publish travelogues, but in which the world is accessible to the protagonist – in print. Its focus on the home allows it to be written into the domestic registers of the nation, even if it borrows – quite freely – from the world. *Parikśā Gūru* is an experiment in a new form and a product of generic and linguistic translation. Das does not use the terms "world literature" or "national literature" in his preface. But through the practice of

7 Isa pustaka ke racane meiṃ mujahko Mahābhārata adi Sanskṛta, Gulistāna vagaire Fārasī, Spekṭeṭara, Lārḍa Bekana, Golḍsmitha, Viliyama Kūpara ādi ke purāne lekhoṃ aura strībodha ādi ke vartamāna risāloṃ se baṛī sahāyatā milī hai isaliye ina sabakā meiṃ bahuta upakāra mānatā hūṃ aura dīnadayālu parameśvara kī nirhetuka kṛpā kā sacce mana se amita upakāra mānakara yaha lekha samāpta karatā hūṃ. (14–15).

8 Isa pustaka meiṃ Sanskṛt, Fārasī, Angrezī kī kavitā kā tarjumā apanī bhāshā ke chandoṃ meiṃ huā hai parantu chandoṃ ke niyama aura dūsare deśoṃ kā cāla calana judā hone kī kaṭhināī se pūrā tarjumā karane ke badale kahiṃ kahiṃ bhāvārtha le liyā gayā hai. (14).

translation, citation, recycling, and repurposing of world literary works, Das encodes and recodes these terms for his readership. He replicates in many ways Goethe's thoughts on the aesthetic affinities between literary traditions, captured famously in his statement on "poesy as the Gemeingut" – the shared property – of humanity. The novel becomes an instrument of, and instrumental to, what Marx and Engels note in their statement on world literature – that the cosmopolitan consumption of goods and ideas leads to the creation of literature as shared property (*Gemeingut*). At a moment of radical transformation of the print cultural landscape in northern India, Das benefits from, as it fortifies, a society's pact with books.

Post-Independence Shared Readings: The UNESCO World Literary Catalogue

In 1965, Mahadevi Varma – the renowned Hindi poet, essayist, and short-story writer – addressed the legislative assembly of Uttar Pradesh, a state in northern India. In her speech, "Sāhitya, Sanskṛtī, aura Śāsana" (Literature, Culture, and Governance), Varma emphasized literature as a shared cultural heritage of humanity that breaks down barriers between nations and peoples. Juxtaposing Sanskrit and Awadhi authors such as Kalidasa and Tulasidasa with English and Russian authors such as Shakespeare and Tolstoy respectively, Varma asserted that they belonged as much to the specific linguistic and national communities of their origin as to those outside of these communities: "They belong to everyone in that they belong to each one."[9]

Varma expressed her ideas in a young postcolonial state, in a developing economy, where the spirit of international cooperation through the United Nations informed the republic's pact with its publics, and the public pact with books. One of the key studies of print culture in South Asia was commissioned in 1967 by UNESCO (1972). The purpose of this study was to "bridge the gulf and disparity among the developed and underdeveloped nations of the world" and to "instill in the minds and hearts of the people, a will to achieve their collective national aspirations" through use of good reading materials (xv). Ceylon, Burma, India, and Pakistan (West and East – the latter known as Bangladesh since 1971), along with Iran, were represented in this study. This study is remarkable for a number of reasons. First, it centralizes illiteracy and poverty as factors central to access to books and literature, as it

9 "Sāhitya kī bhūmi para Kālīdāsa aura Tulasīdāsa jitane hamāre haim utane sāre viśva ke haiṃ aura Śekspiyar, Gorkī, Ṭālsṭāya ādi jitane apane deśoṃ ke haiṃ utane hī hamāre haiṃ . . . Ve saba ke hone ke liye hī prtyeka ke haiṃ" (Varma 1975: 43).

tries to juggle with issues of multilingualism in new nations building their educational infrastructure. Second, by factoring in multilingual readerships in largely unorganized book industries the entire report helps to challenge notions of production, distribution, and circulation of books that are at the heart of, say, French or German book history. And finally, the report creates a catalogue of world literature which embodies national self-representation through the cultural ministries of young postcolonial nations.

The 1967 report can be read as a foundational documentation of literature, culture, and governance in the post-World War II period. It led up to the UNESCO initiative, in 1968, of creating "Lists of Representative Works of World Literature Recommended for Translation" (UNESCO 1972). This project was undertaken by UNESCO in 1969 at the request of the member states. Its purpose in doing this was twofold: on the one hand, to establish an "ideal library" reflecting as far as possible every work in the ancient and modern world which possesses an exemplary literary value; on the other hand, to propose to member states a selection of literary works worthy of being translated. Out of the 125 National Commissions contacted, 63 communicated lists and two responded in the negative. The list, which was finally published in 1976, is an important political inventory of works of Indian languages considered to be important. In contrast to Asian and African nations, European nations dominate the list, filling in the thirty titles in a particular language with no trouble. From "Indian" literatures, while Bengali dominates the list, with the exception of Tagore, all of the other fourteen works are marked "East Pakistan." Hindi has four works, Punjabi is simply represented by "Folk Songs," Sanskrit is absent, and so is the *Gita*.

While the UNESCO project becomes central to the bibliomigrancy of contemporary Indian literatures to the world, the construction of national as well as world literatures in Indian languages is carried out by two main institutions: the National Book Trust (NBT, established in 1957 under the National five-year plan) and the Sahitya Akademi, established in 1954. The objectives of the NBT were to produce and encourage the production of good literature in English, Hindi, and twenty-five other Indian languages, to make such literature available at moderate prices to the public, and to bring out book catalogues, arrange book fairs/exhibitions and seminars, and take all necessary steps "to make the people book minded." The NBT still shapes the Indian *Bibliograph*, further splitting mainstream literature from the so-called Tribal Literatures.

The Sahitya Akademi – which Francesca Orsini aptly calls the harbinger of a "federal republic of letters" in India (2017) – was created in 1954 to promote the

publication of literary and critical works in Indian languages, in original, as well as in translations. In his inaugural address to the Akademi, S. Radhakrishnan, philosopher, scholar, a translator of the *Bhagawad Gita* into English, and the second president of India, stated:

> The phrase, Sahitya Akademi, combines two words. "Sahitya" is Sanskrit, and "Academy" is Greek through English. This name suggests our universal outlook and aspiration. Sahitya is a literary composition; Academy is an assembly of men who are interested in the subject. So Sahitya Akademi will be an assembly of all those who are interested in creative and critical literature.
>
> (Sahitya Akademi n.d.)

Indeed Sahitya Akademi became the prime cultural platform of the Indian government for the promotion of literary translations and their recognition through prizes.

More than half a century later, as India is a recognized as a major player on the world stage, the relationship among "literature, culture, and governance" has drastically changed. At stake in India today is the very meaning of Sanskrit and Hindi words for literature, *Sāhitya*, which purportedly comes from the adjective *sahita* (together, associate, congruent) with *dha* (to put), implying placing two things in relation (Krishnamoorthy 1985). In the contemporary Indian context, I want to underline, the very notion of "shared" and "putting things together in relation" is under duress, thus deepening the rift between the indigenous and the foreign in the Indian public sphere. Exemplifying this tension is a "library" of classical Indian literatures.

Early Twenty-First Century: A Fragile Pact with Books

As India tries to register its role as a global player in the world economy, there is a growing tension between the reading publics and republic to which they belong. On the one hand, the rise in disposable income and noticeable increase in access to education have led to an expansion of the reading population. India's literacy rate was at 75 percent in 2011 and is projected to reach 90 percent by 2020. The Indian publishing industry is in the middle of an unprecedented growth period. According to the marketing research company PricewaterhouseCoopers, India became the tenth largest book market in 2014, and book consumption in India will continue to drive the growth in total global book revenues in the twenty-first century (2019). "The India Book Market Report" (2015) registered that India's print book market

grew at a rate of 20.4 percent, compounded annually between 2012 and 2015 (Mallya 2016). Indian cities host around sixty literary festivals every year, and the most prestigious of them all, the Jaipur Literary Festival, has become the largest literary festival in the Asia-Pacific today (Hazra 2014).

On the other hand, this very celebration of books has been disrupted – at times violently – with state-sponsored or state-supported intolerance toward diversity of opinions in the public sphere. Dissent and opposition – key to a democratic society – have been regularly been called acts of "sedition," and suppressed in the name of "national security interests." While the banning of books for potential disturbance of "law and order situations" is a phenomenon that goes back to colonial times, it was exercised at will in the postcolonial period by the Congress party several times during its rule: the government of Uttar Pradesh banned the Hindi translation of Periyar Ramasamy's *The True Ramayana* – a Dalit interpretation of the text – in 1969; the central government banned M. O. Mathai's *Reminiscence of the Nehru Age* in 1978; Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* has been banned since 1988. Especially since 2014, the public cultural space in India has experienced a culture of forceful elimination of a tradition of questioning and critique. There have been repeated attempts to suppress pluralistic, secular, and liberal interpretations of India's multilingual, multiethnic, and multi-religious past (Chandran 2017). The ban on Joseph Lelyveld's book on Mahatma Gandhi in the state of Gujarat in 2006, the purging of A. K. Ramanujan's essay "Three Hundred Ramayanas" from the curriculum of Delhi University in 2011 (Biswas 2011), and the movement to ban Wendy Doniger's *The Hindus: An Alternative History* by Śikśā Bacāo Āndolana Samīti (The Movement to Save Education) in 2014 (Nadadhur 2015) are all part of the attempts to modify the catalog of Indian literatures on grounds of nativism and indigenous expertise and superiority.

While the tension between the national and the worldly is part of civic debate in any democratic society – and postcolonial India has been no exception – in the first four years of the Bharatiya Janata Party rule in India, this tension acquired a particularly militant dimension through political outfits that equalize Indian national with the majoritarian Hindutva ideology. The incessant efforts to shut any opposition and critique have marred the otherwise pluralistic structure of the nation. From public lynchings of Muslims and Dalits on suspicion of either storing or eating beef, or handling of carcasses, to the public shaming, threatening, and killing of intellectuals whose ideas challenge the state-sponsored and state-sanctioned forms of ideology, all the way to labeling individuals seditious and anti-national – the Indian state under Modi

has emerged as the most invasive of all national governments since independence. In 2015, this suppression led to many authors returning their Sahitya Akademi awards.

In 2016, a petition was launched on change.org. Led by Ganesh Ramakrishnan, Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, the 132 initial co-signatories – academics and university administrators from fields as wide-ranging as management, technology, physics, English literature, Sanskrit literature, and "Indic Studies" – petitioned the "Removal of Sheldon Pollock as mentor and Chief Editor of Murty Classical Library" (Ramasubramanian 2015). Signatories of the petition included prominent university leaders from major public universities in India, public intellectuals, as well as a former chief election commissioner of India, who is now on the national board for the promotion of Sanskrit.

The Murty Classical Library of India was launched in 2010 by Rohan Murty, son of Narayan Murty of the software giant Infosys (PTI 2015). Through a $5.6 million bequest to Harvard University Press, the series began publishing classics of Indian literature in dual-language format in January 2015. The first few titles included Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama* (translator Wheeler Thackston), Bulle Shah's *Sufi Lyrics* (translator Christopher Schackle), and Surdas's *Sur's Ocean* (translator Kenneth Bryant). The signatories of the petition thank the Murtys for their "good intentions and financial commitment to establish the Murty Classical Library of India" but clearly state that "Such a historical project would have to be guided and carried out by a team of scholars who not only have proven mastery in the relevant Indian languages, but are also deeply rooted and steeped in the intellectual traditions of India. They also need to be imbued with a sense of respect and empathy for the greatness of Indian civilization" (Ramasubramanian 2015). While recognizing Pollock as a well-known philologist, the petitioners objected to his "antipathy towards many of the ideals and values cherished and practiced in our civilization," which they trace to his echoing of the "views of Macaulay and Max Weber" (Ramasubramanian 2015). Through his political views, they stated, Pollock has shown "disrespect for the unity and integrity of India . . . and therefore cannot be considered objective and neutral enough to be in charge of your historic translation project." As a solution, they asked for "fair representation of lineages and traditional groups that teach and practice the traditions described in the texts being translated," a set of "standards and policies for the entire project," but, most strikingly, invoking Prime Minister Modi's slogan "Make in India," they urged the software giant Infosys to play a part in the promotion of a homegrown "Swadeshi Indology" (Ramasubramanian 2015).

By way of compacting this seemingly long set of demands in the petition, let me offer three points: First, through a well-manipulated orientalist critique, the signatories privileged indigenous translators over the foreign. Second, by formulating their resistance of Pollock under the disguise of a plea for nationality and caste-based representation, they sought to control the translation, circulation, and reception of India's classics by Indians. Third, and most importantly, with the invocation of the "Make in India" slogan, the petitioners recognized the commercial value of books and wanted to appropriate the series as part of India's "global share" in the book market. In fact, Makarand Paranjpe, then professor of English at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and one of the initial signatories, clearly stated in an article that the "project did not seem to score well on the commonsensical scale of home economics . . . it seems likely that we could have ensured greater cost-effectiveness in India" (Paranjape 2016).

While the petition garnered much attention, also in the US public sphere, Pollock stayed away from a reactionary stance for the longest time. Very recently, however, in an article published in the German journal of philology *Geschichte der Germanistik. Historische Zeitschrift für die Philologen*, Pollock presents a comprehensive history of the Murty Library, from the inception of the idea to its print cultural realization (Pollock 2018). Pollock locates his discussion of the Murty Library within a series of larger discursive questions: what is India, what is an Indian library, what is a classic, and what should a classical library of India be? – the very title of the article. In presenting this comprehensive history, Pollock does not cite the petition. However, he does consistently express his dismay at the attempts to indigenize everything in India through vocabularies of nativism – in India, and in the Indian diaspora abroad – the roots of which he sees in the rise of a new kind of ownership of all that is Indian, which in turn shuns all that is foreign (2018: 20). In surmising the formation of the Indian canon, Pollock clearly states, "canons, as we know from the canon-wars of the recent past, are always expressions of culture-power relations" (15). And this is the context in which he also discusses the canonization of the *Bhagavad Gita*: "in the heyday of Orientalist critique, we were repeatedly told that it was the orientalists who canonized the *Bhagavad Gita*. They did nothing of that sort . . . the work was canonized by the eighth century at the latest . . . nor did they create a canon of Indian literature" (15). Nonetheless, the selective interpretation of effects of colonialism, and a nationalist sense of propriety, anything that amounts to the dissemination of Indian literatures into the world through anyone other than Indian is considered unacceptable. Pollock ends his essay on a poignant note:

> If basmati rice and neem twigs and even yoga can be copyrighted by the Indian state and somehow restricted in their distribution, Kalidasa and Tulsidas and Muhammad Taqi Mir cannot. Anyone who cares to learn Sanskrit, Hindi, or Urdu may share in the beauty of their poetry – and now, anyone who knows English. (21)

Much like Das's "humble" attempt at writing a novel, which defies national-linguistic boundaries to present a new literary genre, akin to Mahadevi Varma's statement on the shared belonging of world literature due to local specificity, Pollock also decries the attempts to nationalize literatures to create lack of access. All three of them, in their own varied ways, expand the catalogue of Indian literatures, underlining its pluralistic nature.

Conclusion

In her book *This Thing Called the World*, Debjani Ganguly discusses the "affective fraternity" of readership that a global novel tries to create (2016: 104). Central to her exploration of the globality of the novel is the "linguistic and cultural polyphony," a carrying over of "foreign voices" (105). The term "affective fraternity" can be well utilized to think through the creation of readerships through catalogues of national or world literatures. In postcolonial nations such as India, state-sponsored or state-supported cultural institutions have played a key role in shaping the print cultural public sphere and creating such affective fraternities of readerships: within the national boundaries, and abroad. Paying attention to multiple manifestations of such fraternities, in tandem with the state's investment in or divestment from print culture, provides new insights into the proliferation of world literature through the bibliomigrancy of ancient classics. Moments of transformation of print culture through national cultural institutions must be evaluated in the larger global contexts: of international collaborations facilitated by institutions such as UNESCO, as well as multinational trade and commerce.

In the case of India, as I have shown, the pact between the republic and the reading public has undergone multiple transformations. The term world literature in India today can serve as a useful moniker to think through the productive tensions between the indigenous and the foreign, the national and the worldly. But doing so will require an acute awareness of a rather fragile pact with books, and the political value of the literary catalogue.

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43

The Cultural Industry and Digital World Making

SANDRA PONZANESI

This chapter addresses the dynamics of world literature from a postcolonial angle, integrating the role of the cultural industry in the dynamics of literature across borders. It focuses on the acceleration of production and consumption of world literature, while also highlighting the persistence of the postcolonial agenda as a field of resistance to dominant and hegemonic forms of cultural appropriation.

For this purpose, it might be useful to reframe the debate between world literature and postcolonial literature, which as categories include almost everything, in order to specify how the cultural industry operates across the two fields. Though the debates are quite complex and sophisticated (see the discussion in Damrosch and Spivak 2011), what is relevant is that postcolonial literature resists universal claims, and though aimed at transcending the local, is strongly inflected by the relevance of the particular and always engaged with the political in the broadest sense (Young 2011).

The field of world literature has many aspects that overlap with postcolonial literature, but also features that are distinctive and specific. According to Damrosch, world literature refers to literary texts which have traveled beyond their culture of origin, generally in translation (the aesthetic dimension), and that offer a "window on the world" presenting different places and cultures in an assimilable way (the sociological/anthropological dimension) (Damrosch 2003). This refers not only to literatures from the former empires, or categorically from the non-European, non-Western world, but also to canonical literatures from the West. In this sense the worldliness of world literature can be captured more under the aegis of what makes a classic stand

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the test of time, following Coetzee's discussion that a classic achieves its status by being "read" through different generations (1993). There is no guarantee that circulation of a text as a classic will hold through time.

The postcolonial cultural industry refers not only to the operations of commodification of the East and the Global South in general (neo-orientalism and exoticism branding) but also to the more technical and commercial relationship between postcolonial culture and its redistribution via commercial structures such as publishing, film and music, art and museums (Ponzanesi 2014: 10). Though resonant of Adorno's notion of the "culture industry," which theorized the emerging relationship between art and production in the 1930s, seen as a manipulation of the capitalist system for ideological goals, the postcolonial cultural industry entails the possibility of resistance and subversion within commercial distribution. In short, culture critique remains vigilant within the process of commodification and globalization of the postcolonial cultural field.

For world literature the cultural industry is, instead, part of its essence, as the market makes sure that certain classics reach beyond their area of origin through renewed translations and reprints or becoming part of anthologies and institutionalized curricula. The translatability of a text is also neither neutral nor immune to the logic of the market place (Apter 2008). Neither is the selection made in anthologies. In that sense, Spivak's warning that anthologies of world literature put up a particular map of literature, "of" the world and "in" the world, is not unfounded:

> They do so linguistically, presenting, and hence reducing all the world's literature to, in essence, "in English" literature, and they do so culturally, by "US-style" world literature becoming the staple of Comparative Literature in the Global South. (Spivak 2003: 39)

However, also following Spivak's concerns, the notion of world literature is approached not only for its material capacity to circulate and follow networks that are shaped by both cultural and economic patterns (the cultural industry), but also for its cosmopolitan dimension, expressing and rendering worldliness through its literary imagination.

Pheng Cheah's critique of the notion of world literature is relevant here. Firstly, there is the contradiction of the capitalist world-system that allows for the greatest extension of the global reach of some, while severely undermining that of others, therefore not creating genuine global unity. It is important, therefore, to understand the notion of worldliness from the perspective of the postcolonial South and see the narratives that attempt to remake the world

against capitalist globalization. Secondly, world literature should be understood in connection with new notions of cosmopolitanism that account for economic globalization, transnational migration, and global communication (Cheah 2016: 2):

> The deeper reason for the missed encounter between world literature and cosmopolitanism is that neither field of study has carefully examined the key concept common to them, *the world*. Cosmopolitanism is about viewing oneself as part of a world, a circle of political belonging that transcends the limited ties of kinship and country to embrace the whole of deterritorialized humanity. (3)

According to this definition, cosmopolitanism allows us to perceive the world through our imagination. Theories of world literature have greatly expanded since its inception. They refer not only to the circulation of texts that cut across national borders and are expressed in multiple languages, but also to texts that generate new cartographies that go beyond the relations between north and south (such as the oceanic, the hemispheric, the transregional, and the multi-sited), embracing global challenges that are human in nature but planetary in scale (global conflicts, humanitarian crises, environmental migration, and natural catastrophes), that are ideal for multimedia adaptation, and that use different technologies of circulation, which have increased exponentially with the digital revolution (Saussy 2006, 2009; Ganguly 2016).

Yet for Cheah, world literature should be not only about the inclusion of world issues in its themes but also about acknowledging the impact of world literature on the world, focusing on the power of literature itself to generate new worlds (2016: 3). The shortcomings here lie in equating the world with a global market and in having a restricted understanding of the relation between literature and capitalist globalization.

> Instead of exploring what literature can contribute to an understanding of the world and its possible role in remaking the world in contemporary globalization, theories of world literature have focused on the implication of global circulation for the study of literature. They have turned away from questions about literature's worldly causality and avoided examining the normative dimension of worldliness. (2016: 5)

The understanding of world literature in terms of the circulation of commodities, and as an expression of transnational market exchange, resonates with the discussion around the cultural industry. So if, from the postcolonial side, we have the resilience of national literatures and the oppositional politics of subaltern voices, there is within the regime of value of

postcoloniality a booming "otherness industry" that thrives on the invention and admiration of exotic traditions and the fetishization of difference. But the commercialization and distribution of postcolonial texts, often facilitated by the recognition and garnering of Western prestigious literary prizes such as the Booker, the Nobel, the Neustadt, and Pulitzer among others, does not necessarily allow them access to the pantheon of world literature, unless the very notion of world literature is revisited.

The Culture Industry

The term "culture industry" was originally coined by Theodor Adorno in the 1920s and was later elaborated by Max Horkheimer in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* ([1947] 1996). They saw the culture industry as a persuasive structure that produced cultural commodities for mass audiences, while supporting dominant political and economic interests. Their pessimistic thinking was deeply influenced by the dark times they were living in – the rise of Nazism in Germany, their exile in the United States as Jews, and their experience up close of a society in profound transformation, in which art as a critical tool had been replaced by art as a commodity.

Adorno and Horkheimer argue that cultural forms create a means of income for their creators, so profit has become more important than artistic expression. Hence, culture has turned into an industry and cultural objects are looked at as products. Paintings are turned into posters, music into records, and novels into films. In this respect, through its use of technological rationality, the culture industry brings forth standardization, commercialization, and popularization, eliminating the critical power of consumers.

> Movies and radios need no longer pretend to be art. The truth that they are just businesses is made into an ideology in order to justify the rubbish they deliberately produce. They call themselves industries; and when their directors' incomes are published, any doubt about the social utility of the finished product is removed. (Adorno and Horkheimer 1996: 121)

Though pessimistic, slightly elitist, and rather obsolete in a digital age that promotes participatory culture, Adorno and Horkheimer's thinking is still relevant to addressing patterns of domination and control within global flows. Is art just a lucrative business in the modern economy or is it pure entertainment? Can it still operate autonomously and has it retained its critical edge? Is there still a division between elite and popular culture, or

bourgeois and everyday culture, or do we need other paradigms to account for culture in an age of globalization?

As celebrated national figures, postcolonial authors are elected as spokespersons for their nation by powerful global literary brokers. Yet these authors are sometimes disliked in their home countries, often because they are seen to be part of a cosmopolitan intelligentsia that sells out to the demands of Western markets. But underlying this is a more substantial question of hybridization – that is, of the translation and transformation of local issues into those of global resonance. Many authors of postcolonial provenance focus on cosmopolitan practices for the purpose of transgressing, and thereby altering, existing literary canons and narrative strategies. The successful work of prize-winning migrant authors shows how recent marketing campaigns and critical appraisals can help shape the definition of a new cosmopolitan aesthetics by questioning the desirability of national canons.

The exploration of new cosmopolitan spaces in contemporary culture is revitalizing both for the classic definitions of cosmopolitanism and for ongoing debates about place, identity, and cultural difference. An open question that remains is the extent to which European culture and literature have been transformed by the cultures they colonized, and how the notion of cosmopolitanism has become qualified by those spaces (colonial periphery, third world metropolis, inner-city suburbs) and identities (migrants, women, ethnic minorities) which had so far been considered marginal or relegated to their peripheral national canons. The exploration of these entanglements with the cultural industry is essential to understanding postcolonial cosmopolitans as complicit with the glamorization of migration and the marketing of otherness for the purpose of bland multiculturalism and transnationalism. The argument here asserts that cosmopolitanism from below is a valuable concept with which to radically contest histories of domination, without necessarily giving in to a poetics of marginalization (Ponzanesi 2014).

This is also particularly relevant to the debate on Afropolitanism and the way in which it tackles the glamor of origins with the patina of globalization. For Achille Mbembe, "Afropolitanism" is the cosmopolitan awareness of African origin, which rejects the essentialistic and nativist discourse of Négritude and Pan-Africanism. To him, embracing Afropolitanism is a way of renouncing pernicious racialized thinking in favor of more fluid and interconnected identities, as also theorized by Paul Gilroy in the seminal *Black Atlantic*, where the notion of "black race" is rejected as a unifying code. Mbembe is very wary of the mythology around African traditions and

reminds us of Fanon's warning against the pitfalls of nationalism (Fanon [1963] 1968).

But Afropolitanism also has a lighter and more commercial tone. It often refers to a classy African citizen of the world (see figures such as Teju Cole or Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Taiye Selasi, or NoViolet Bulawayo, who are "Afropolitans," the new successful representatives of the African diaspora). The issue here is not just the trendiness of Africans outside of Africa; it is more about a poetic and aesthetic that rewrites African modernity. It connects to multiple ways of belonging without necessarily doing away with the politics of oppression and the violence inflicted on the writers' continent and their people. There is ample criticism of the fandom around Afropolitanism and many reservations about its consumeristic nature. Some see it as a boutique for African commodities packaged in intellectual attire (Dabiri 2017). Though empowering and clearly celebratory, the term, which was coined by Taiye Selasi and seems to have appeared for the first time in 2005, is replete with neoliberal ideology. According to Dabiri, the Afropolitan class, which in the end is the elite class, replicates many of the clichés and privileges associated with Eurocentric notions of cosmopolitanism. It does not help to lift up the rest of the continent through Western eyes, and it does not relieve the continent from the operations of the IMF, the World Bank, and the neocolonial forces of China's new investors.

For Dabiri, Afropolitanism is too glossy, polite, and compromised by its associations with big business and capitalism, and too much a digestible narrative of Africa on the rise that the West is eager to promote and embrace. But it is also important to point out that Afropolitanism is far from being a homogenous field; instead, it works as a general umbrella term under which many issues related to the cultural industry are framed. Even though it may not be an alternative to Adichie's "danger of a single story" (2009) and is too close to African narratives of Afro-pessimism and poverty porn, it is also a phenomenon that conveys the power of resistance and criticism, and it cannot be simply reduced to a "stylistic" embrace of a "hipster" African experience (Ponzanesi 2017).

This is the warning that Ellis Cashmore raises in his book *The Black Cultural Industry* (1997), that the commodification of hip-hop and rap has not meant financial revenues for either the black groups or their surroundings but has instead primarily generated income for record labels, often controlled by white people, providing an illustration of Adorno's warning about the record industry specifically from a race perspective. This is because the consumption of "black music" has not automatically fostered cultural integration or

understanding among different groups but, as Cashmore writes, has created a cordon sanitaire around the dangers and risks of blackness by consuming, at a safe distance, some of its products and spirit. The visibility of black culture in the entertainment industry might prove to be far from emancipatory given that power relations remain, in the end, essentially unchanged. As Cashmore writes, if alterity is remade by Western market forces against the backdrop of escalating racism, xenophobia, and restrictive immigration policies, then something has gone awry in the "postcolonial" turn in cultural studies, and a new critical awareness needs to be raised (Cashmore 1997: 3).

This is a position shared by Paul Gilroy, who argues that commodification has destroyed what was wonderful about black culture to the advantage of corporate interests, though he stills see the contradictions and potential of music as a unique transmitter of cultures across diaspora. In his book *Darker than Blue* (2010), Gilroy explores the ways in which objects and technologies have become social forces that can ensure black culture's global reach while undermining the drive for equality and justice. Gilroy considers consumerism, consisting of luxury cars and branded items, as having diverted African Americans' social and political aspirations. The result is a weakened sense of citizenship and diminished collective spirit. Gilroy notes that much of what is now considered part of US worldwide culture – jazz, rap, hip-hop, and blues – stems from Afro-American origins. While many see this as a triumph of counterculture, Gilroy raises concern about black music's capacity to maintain its oppositional thinking in the face of its commodification by the global cultural industry (Gilroy 2010: 172).

The postcolonial cultural industry is not just about the trendiness of third world culture on sale, but also a way of striking back by "formally" abiding by the rules of the marketplace while undermining the very system from within. It would be unfair to dismiss a writer such as Chimamanda Adichie and her critique of Western visions of race and African identities as merely cool and trivial just because of her great popularity and success among Western readers. Many successful texts are not celebrated only for their exoticism or out of political correctness but because they offer a counter-narrative to dominant European civilizational discourses about race and culture.

We could read the specific dynamics of the "postcolonial" culture industry as being double-edged: on the one hand, exploring how postcolonial texts shape and interact with the cultural industry, therefore claiming a positive and active role in the form of participatory culture, and how bottom-up participation can change the structure of market forces (Rheingold 1995; Jenkins 2006); and on the other hand, accounting for how cultural difference,

so central to postcolonial critique, itself becomes commodified (Gilroy 1993; Cashmore 1997; Hutnyk 2000; Huggan 2001; Brouillette 2007; Ponzanesi 2014; Lau and Mendes 2011).

In this way, the making of world literature is not left only to the mechanisms of circulation, exchange, and reception but also entails the integration of a cosmopolitan dimension that aspires to a world without borders, which is both a part of new imaginaries and of a politics of contestation. The shaping of new cosmopolitan imaginaries has also become much easier thanks to the use of digital technologies that manage to compress space and time and create forms of connectivity which were not possible before, reconfiguring diasporas into virtual communities and offering new strategies for approaching mobility, migration, and networks – these are also central to the debates of world literature.

The digital revolution has changed the ways in which texts can be distributed and reformatted (digitalization of archives, open access, e-publishing, free downloading), greatly contributing to world literature's idea of texts going beyond their point of origin. However, it has also changed the nature of publishing and reading altogether, not only through literature that is published directly online and read through new devices (the Kindle, other e-readers, etc.), but also by inserting the interactive and user-generated aspect of the Internet into the novel format (Murray 1997; Ryan 2001; Brillenburg et al. 2018). Questions of hypertext, immersion, interactivity, and participation have contributed to the mediatization of literature through the Internet. Furthermore, digitalization has eliminated many of the usual cultural industry intermediaries (publishers, agents, editors, critics, translators, reviewers, judges). Today many of these intermediaries are working on websites, blogs, email, e-zines, bulletins, listservs, and social platforms at large.

We also need to consider the rise of the digital humanities that has made digital tools an integral part of studying literature (through machine learning, data mining, and visualization), allowing for the investigation of literary and cultural macro-phenomena: e.g., the evolution of genres, the affirmation of a style and its reception, the recurrence of content or themes, and the notion of influence and intertextuality, therefore emphasizing the sociological aspects of literature. This model of "distant reading," introduced by Franco Moretti, focuses on analyzing computationally massive amounts of textual data, and adopting quantitative methods to examine a determined set of quantifiable textual features. This quantitative formalism is often seen as a powerful means to map world literature without restricting one's attention to the canon of the "great works" or limiting the scope to close reading (Moretti 1998). The idea behind distant reading is that there are synchronic or diachronic literary and

cultural facts and phenomena that cannot be detected through the modes of close reading. Through the automated scrutiny of hundreds or thousands of texts and documents, we can gain access to otherwise unknowable information that plays a significant role in tracking and making sense of literary and cultural facts in the literary development across time and space, creating a different literary atlas. In his later work, Moretti points to the relationality of literature as explainable through trees and waves. The tree describes the passage from unity to diversity, the branching out; the wave is the opposite; it produces similarities by engulfing differences. Trees need geographical discontinuity in order to branch out; waves go beyond barriers and thrive on geographical continuity. Trees and branches are what nation-states cling to, waves are what markets do (Moretti 2000, 2005).

Though these digital developments allow for new forms of connectivity, participation, and classification, the Internet does not do away with forms of inequalities that are retransmitted in the digital sphere. As Roopika Risam writes, "digital humanities practitioners, therefore, must also interrogate colonialist and neo-colonial politics through projects designed to intervene in the epistemologies of digital knowledge production" (2018: 19). Colonialism and digital humanities are both projects in worldmaking, and postcolonial digital humanities, Risam claims, "emphasize the possibility of creating new worlds that resist inscriptions of colonialism in the digital cultural record" (20). To underscore the role of colonial violence and representation in the digital archive is central to avoiding the allure of digital methods and digital humanities as revitalizing humanities education without considering the political, ethical, and social justice-minded approaches to digital knowledge production.

In the next section, following Cheng's notion of worldmaking, I will focus on the power of digital technologies not in order to establish how they heighten and accelerate the circulation of world texts, but rather as a feature within the literary text itself that helps to shape new cosmopolitan imaginaries and generate new worlds. Cosmopolitanism is a viable paradigm for a digitally connected and highly mediatized world, in which the worlding of texts is enabled by the technical and at the same time utopian possibilities of digital media, while still considering the ethical dimension of digital knowledge production.

World Literature in the Making: Digital Homecomings

In this section, the role of digital technologies is explored through new narrative strategies and tropes. The texts chosen negotiate the space of

migration and diaspora in interesting and challenging ways. In them, technology serves as an active medium through which postcolonial worldliness is articulated. My case studies are Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* (2014), in which blogging is used as a form of advocacy, Moshin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017), which introduces the expedient of magic doors as portals to overcome the sense of stagnancy in migration, and the poems of Warson Shire, who emerges as a prominent new Instapoet capable of cutting across audiences, generations, and media platforms.

Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah,* Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction[1] in 2013, is a successful novel by the Nigerian-American writer, who can be considered to be part of the Afropolitanism movement. The novel's protagonist is Ifemelu, a Nigerian migrant in the United States who grapples with the difficulty of racial identity by starting a blog. She returns to Lagos in the end as a successful Afro-American, and the novel seems to reach full circle by finding a balance in which imperfections are embraced and a wholesome sense of identity is realized. *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and The National Book Critics Circle Awards, and is winner of the LA Times Book Prize for fiction. *Exit West* is a spellbinding wartime romance. The war is represented by an unnamed refugee crisis in an unnamed city, where Saeed, who works in advertising, meets Nadia, an insurance agent, in a class on "corporate identity and product branding." While the city is increasingly under siege, daily activities like going to work or meeting outside become increasingly impossible, and what was routine now requires major effort and great risks. The two lovers decide to flee. With great sadness they leave their families behind. They go through a magic door that works as a "portal" and get teleported to the "West."

To turn to my third author, Warsan Shire, she is a prominent British-Somali poet, born in Kenya and now living in London and Los Angeles. She was the Young Poet Laureate for London in 2013–14. In 2009, Shire wrote "Conversations about home (at a deportation centre)," a piece inspired by a visit she made to the abandoned Somali Embassy in Rome which some young refugees had turned into their home. In an interview, she told the reporter that "The night before she visited, a young Somali had jumped to his

[1] The National Book Critics Circle Awards are a set of annual American literary awards to promote "the finest books and reviews published in English." The National Book Critics Circle comprises more than 700 critics and editors from leading newspapers, magazines, and online publications. https://lithub.com/here-are-the-finalists-for-the-2017-national-book-critics-circle-awards/

death off the roof." The encounter, she says, opened her eyes to the harsh reality of living as an undocumented refugee in Europe: "I wrote the poem for them, for my family and for anyone who has experienced or lived around grief and trauma in that way." This poem became the basis for "Home" (Bausells and Shearlaw 2015). "Home" has been shared widely across media and has been read in a range of public spaces, including London's Trafalgar Square.

The connection of these writers to the notion of world literature and the cultural industry is due to their successful circulation, translation, and reception, facilitated also by their garnering of prestigious literary prizes such as Neustadt, National Book Critics Circle Award, the LA Book Prize, and the distinction of Poet Laureate. However, it is also due to their shaping of new cosmopolitan imaginaries, crafted through literary experimentation with digital modes.

Blogging

Western stereotypes of Africa are debunked throughout *Americanah*. A central way in which those stereotypes are questioned is through the characters' use of technology. A crucial factor is Ifemelu's blog, for it is there that she finds her voice while navigating a culture largely determined to silence it. Her blog serves as an outlet for her reactions to life in America and, of course, also as her primary source of income before she returns to Nigeria. The Internet allows Ifemelu to speak to a much wider audience than she could otherwise reach. Blogs are excellent ways to share experiences and ideas with people who possess a wide range of backgrounds and ideologies, something Ifemelu may not be able to do within her own circle of friends. Moreover, Ifemelu may not feel completely comfortable discussing her ideas and experiences with everyone around her and thus turns to the Internet as a forum for discussion and sharing.

The space articulated through blogging, and the use of the Internet, is therefore not a simple trick to construct a modern version of the classic novel interspersed with epistolary moments, nor is it simply meant to lend an autobiographical dimension in the form of a testimonial to the novel. It is more of an essayistic addition, like a journalistic opinion column, which follows no restrictions and is a kind of stream of consciousness for the digital era:

> I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America . . . But we don't talk about it. (Adichie 2014: 290)

Ifemulu's blog becomes a mirror in which to examine various issues of race, feminism, and identity in America. On the topic of blogging in *Americanah*, Serena Guarracino states that it serves as "a space, both embedded in but also outside creative writing, and as a place where social realities of race can be discussed without the trappings of character and action" (2014:. 2). The social reality of race is clearly that there is an expected way to perform that must be learned as yet another splintered identity. Blogging in America is a "Way of Writing Back." According to Mary Joyce, "a blog is a great advocacy tool because it allows any individual with an Internet connection to launch a campaign for social change with a potentially global reach. It gives ordinary citizens incredible power to question authority, act as alternative sources of information, organize supporters, and lobby those in power" (2015: 3).

The separation between blogging as metanarrative device and the rest of the narrative in *Americanah* is very much embedded in a new cosmopolitan vision of blackness and identity from an Afropolitan perspective. As the novel progresses, its social commentary moves back and forth between the act of blogging and the main narrative, thus gradually blurring the line between blogging as social advocacy and literature as worlding.

Hypertext to the West

In Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, migration does not involve life-or-death journeys in the backs of lorries, rubber rafts, or on flimsy dinghies. There are no middle passages or bodies washed ashore, but rather, "doors that could take you elsewhere, often to places far away." This trope renders the cognitive shock of having been freshly transplanted to tough new terrains tangible but makes forced migration more relatable. Hamid pictures a world in which doors replace passport control with the promise of a new life on the other side. In theory, these are doors to a better world. But they are one-way: once you step through them, there is no way back. Prior to its release, Hamid said, "Everyone is a migrant, even people who are in the same place, because that place changes over decades" (Tahir 2018). And: "If we can have this shared notion of migration, it becomes easier to have a conversation" (Milo 2017).

Exit West has all the tropes of world literature: a love story set against generalized violence and apocalypse; it is also a daunting political allegory with some special magic realist effects. But it is also a very captivating and intelligent novel; it spins new narrative strategies that surpass the effects these tropes generate. Familiar as the trope of doors may be as thresholds to our privacy and safety as well as hospitality and welcoming, in Hamid's novel

they become forces of estrangement as well as openings toward utopian vistas.

The idea of doors in the novel functioning as portals – technically hypertexts that link one world to the next in cyberspace – is a way of intensifying displacement without becoming prey to the nitty-gritty of migratory journeys and dangerous crossings. These magic doors are therefore an ingenious way of describing in a different manner the common plight of refugees, who are normally given attention more for their risky itineraries than for the potentialities of arrival. In *Exit West*, Hamid's use of magical quick-access doors humanizes refugees and shrinks the inaccessibility of the world that so many people experience.

Throughout Saeed and Nadia's story, Hamid intersperses vignettes of magic realist migration, in which the circumstances and desires that govern the outcome of each crossing are always unpredictable. Hamid is very skilled at evoking the almost contradictory nature of Nadia and Saeed's digital life (their phones are "antennas that sniffed out an invisible world" and transport them "to places distant and near"), and whose broadband freedoms contrast with the roadblocks, barbed wire, and camps they face in what passes for reality. Saeed and Nadia smoke joints on their dates and text each other at work and order mushrooms online. But the Internet quickly becomes a luxury of the past as their mobile phone services are abruptly interrupted:

> Deprived of the portals to each other and to the world provided by their mobile phones, and confined to their apartments by the night-time curfew, Nadia and Saeed, and countless others, felt marooned and alone and much more afraid. (2017: 60)

In the absence of mobile phone signals, "it was as if they were bats that had lost the use of their ears, and hence their ability to find things as they flew in the dark" (61). This sense of cyber dislocation also triggers an emotional dislocation, for without their smartphones, Saeed and Nadia cannot perform their daily routines of meeting: "The day after their phone signals died Saeed went to their usual burger joint at lunchtime, but Nadia did not show up, and the day after that, when he went again, the restaurant was shuttered, its owner perhaps having fled, or simply disappeared" (61). Once the smartphone infrastructures are jeopardized, Saeed and Nadia disconnect from each other not only spatially, but also emotionally. This disconnection is part of the novel's realistic framework in an account that imitates a real-life situation of vulnerability and stuckness. According to Ghassan Hage, "stuckness," or the desire to avoid it, is one of the primary motivations for movement. Hage

claims, "People engage in the physical form of mobility that we call migration because they are after existential mobility. . . . They are looking for a space and a life where they feel they are going somewhere as opposed to nowhere, or at least, a space where the quality of their 'going-ness' is better than what it is in the space they are leaving behind" (Hage 2009: 98).

Some migrants may be made more vulnerable to waiting, especially when they do not know when or if a door, either real or digital, might open for them again. *Exit West* finds its way out of "stuckness" by way of magic doors. The narrative strategy of compressing the refugee's journey into brief temporal vacuums follows this same logic of hypertext. As portals between faraway places spread out spatially, the doors compress time, defying the borders between the past, the present, and the future, as well as those between the East and the West, conflict and peace. Randomly appearing, the doors merge beginnings with endings. Upon Saeed and Nadia's first passage from their home to the Greek island of Mykonos, the narrator claims that "[Nadia] was struck by [the door's] darkness, its opacity, the way that it did not reveal what was on the other side, and also did not reflect what was on this side, and so felt equally like a beginning and an end" (103). The expedience of passing through special "doors" seems like an element from magic realism, but as a "portal," the door can also be seen as a metaphor for an electronic entrance and a switching from one system to another, a way of carrying and transferring information as well as identities, through a doorway or gate, as well as through an internet site providing access or links to other sites, and thus acting as a pathway to other content.

The portals that allow entry from poor to rich nations are heavily guarded, but they appear suddenly and unpredictably. Hamid's trope of "migrant doors" resonates with the digital notion of the hypertext, which is also a useful metaphor. Figuratively speaking, hypertext can be understood as a nonhierarchical and a-centred modality. Hypertext incorporates multiplicity; different pathways are possible simultaneously, as hypertext has "multiple entryways and exits" and it "connects any point to any other point" (Landow 2006: 58–61). Feminist theorist Donna Haraway recognized the dynamic character of hypertext: "the metaphor of hypertext insists on making connections as practice." However, she adds, "the trope does not suggest which connections make sense for which purposes and which patches we might want to follow or avoid." We can begin to see the value of approaching the Internet from the perspective of hypertext to make an "inquiry into which connections matter, why, and for whom" (Haraway 1997: 128–30).

This is also in line with the theorizing of postcolonial scholar Jaishree K. Odin on how hypertextual webs might benefit subjects "living at the borders." She describes how subaltern subjects, by weaving their own hypertextual path, can express their multivocality and negotiate cultural differences. Odin suggests that the web reflects a new mode of postcolonial embodiment, as hypertext "is composed of cracks, in-between spaces, or gaps that do not fracture reality into this or that, but instead provide multiple points of articulation with a potential for incorporating contradictions and ambiguities" (1997: 598).

Although in Ex*it West* the interactive dimension of the hypertext is limited to one-way traffic, it retains the possibility of entering different realms, and this has the effect of propelling the protagonists into yet other worlds that would not otherwise have been possible or predictable. And so the trope of "digital technology," a transmitter of possibilities and escape routes, aptly represents the worlding of literature as the shaping of imaginaries that go beyond boundaries and current realities.

Instapoets

This circulation of the diaspora both digitally and offline raises questions about the ways in which diaspora also becomes a property of the cultural industry and subject to the rule of economic exchange. The issues of fetishization and the appropriation of "diasporic" stars like Chimamanda Adichie need to be considered when looking at the worlding of postcolonial authors. Excerpts from Adichie's essay "We Should All Be Feminists" were integrated by Beyoncé in her song *Flawless*, in order to show solidarity among transnational feminists across different race and social backgrounds, as well as to draw attention to the exploitation of diaspora for commercial purposes.

Beyoncé also used the work of Warsan Shire in her video album for "Lemonade," causing Shire's profile to go stratospheric. Between the songs about anger, heartbreak, and betrayal, Beyoncé read Shire's poems such as "For Women Who Are Difficult to Love," "The Unbearable Weight of Staying (The End of the Relationship)," and "Nail Technician as Palm Reader." Shire has mobilized women from African and Somali diasporas in digital media platforms worldwide, and she is championed as a poet whose visceral work encompasses, among many other things, issues of race, sexuality, immigration, politics, and being a Muslim woman.

Shire uses social media as one of her platforms. She is also part of a new generation of "Instapoets," writers publishing verse primarily on social media and finding audiences far beyond the usual bookshelves. These new writers

are redefining the scene and making it relevant to a fresh generation of readers, making poetry hip and fashionable again. According to the *New York Times*, three of the top ten best-selling poetry books (in the USA) have been written by Instapoets: that is, young emerging poets whose medium includes Instagram (Larouci 2018).[2]

Thanks to the emergence of platforms like YouTube and Instagram, there is an upsurge of postcolonial poets, female poets, and trans writers who share their creative and untold stories and lead the way to a new generation of young writers, making the poetry world more accessible, less elitist, and less rarefied than traditional approaches to poetry in the classroom. These new platforms allow for experimentation with a lower threshold, opening the doors to new sorts of skills and opportunities. Self-publishing becomes a viable option to the more impermeable world of the publishing houses and prestigious literary festivals. Just as budding musicians put their own work on YouTube and other channels, and avoid the constriction of the big record labels, Instapoets circumvent the cultural industry by playing by their own rules and becoming a new generation of self-published, DIY contemporary poets, symbolizing an era of radical change in the history of the global cultural industry.

Social media has made it possible to reach readers, who would not normally read poetry, by offering humor and playfulness. Besides the instantaneous and interactive character of the social media platforms, there are also different grammatical and spelling conventions on these platforms that allow for alternative approaches to punctuation and capitalization. Communication is more direct and emotional, and the new medium allows for experimental form as well as language.

> Instapoems tend to be short enough to fit neatly into a single Instagram photo (often in pseudo-typewriter font) and simple enough that readers can instantly grasp the meaning while scrolling on their iPhones.
>
> (Edwards 2017)

Of course, poets have been using experimental punctuation for years in poetry, but Twitter has also made poetry new and fresh, an adaptation of

[2] In Samira Larouci's article "About Instapoets" (2018), Rupi Kaur, the 25-year-old Indian-Canadian poet, is mentioned as the most successful Instapoet. Her bitesize poems tackle themes of misogyny, heartbreak, and violence. She has been number one on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 77 consecutive weeks. Kaur sold over 1.5 million copies of her debut book "Milk and Honey" and she has 5 million followers on Instagram. www.vogue.it/en/news/vogue-arts/2018/05/14/about-instapoets-vogue-italia-may-2018/.

haiku in digital times. This also enables rap poetry, poetry slam, and spoken word poetry to reach a completely new circuit of distribution and reach. But in parallel with the harsh criticism of chick-lit and its trivialization of feminism and literary standards for the sake of commerce,[3] Instapoetry has received harsh criticism alongside praise:

> Poets and readers have been divided on the rise of performance poets in print. Younger poets using social media to gain an audience – Tempest and McNish on YouTube, and Kaur on Instagram, where she has more than two million followers – have been dismissed as populist, while their often extremely autobiographical poetry has been variously praised as brave, or criticised as simple and solipsistic.[4]

In her essay "The Cult of the Noble Amateur," published in the poetry magazine *PN Review*, Rebecca Watts slammed the mostly female-led Instapoetry movement (which includes Rupi Kaur, Hollie McNish, and Kate Tempest) as "consumer-driven content" (2018). Watts sets out a provocative case against the "cohort of young female poets who are currently being lauded by the poetic establishment for their 'honesty' and 'accessibility'" – qualities that Watts associates with the "open denigration of intellectual engagement and rejection of craft that characterizes their work."[5] The essay seems to have opened a whole floodgate of opinions, rebuttals, and responses, especially online, with reactions that either embrace Watts's interventions as "brave" or accuse her of defending the status quo of aesthetics above commerce. Responses often show little solidarity and flexibility toward the emergence of new literary voices and genres.

Even *The Times Literary Supplement* joined the debate, with Michael Caines asking what is at stake in recent disputes about literary fiction and poetry. He asks whether the new generalizations and critiques about "Web 2.0" are not slightly out of sync with what poetry does on Twitter. Why should poetry, he asks, "of all the literary forms," supposedly "have the best chance of escaping social media's dumbing effect"? Whether social media has a dumbing effect

[3] This reminds one too of the debate started by bell hooks on whether Beyoncé's album *Lemonade* is not a sell-out to the cultural industry. bell hooks even called Beyoncé "a terrorist, especially in terms of the impact on young girls" by upholding impossible standards of beauty (hooks 2016). Here more issues are at stake that pertain to intergenerational politics of race and ethnicity as well as of media representations and, indeed, the cultural industry. Beyoncé's messaging is an attempt at balancing the feminist Beyoncé with the businesslike Beyoncé. And ultimately, that's *her* business, according to Crosley Coker (2014).

[4] See Flood and Cain 2018.

[5] The *PN Review* wrote a careful editorial as a response to the avalanche of critiques and endorsements, including the biting response from instapoet Hollie McNish herself (2018).

or not is a larger issue, but it is clear that Caine finds Twitter more entertaining and informative than daft:

> On both sides of the "noble amateur" debate, if that's what this is, there is, of course, fault to be found, but also virtue: as above, Watts has been accused of sour grapes and everything else, whereas, even if her views seem incorrect, she might just as well be admired for intellectual honesty, as McNish is, and for defying the popular way of thinking. And the ensuing commotion has brought out some excellent, passionate commentary – all on social media, strangely enough – on both sides, as well as the customary chippiness.
>
> (Caine 2018)

Though there is stern criticism from traditional highbrow critics, the power of these Instapoets to reach new audiences for poetry is undeniable. Warsan Shire can broadcast her work to nearly 90,000 Twitter followers and 43,000 Instagram followers.

The placing of a poem in a real-time setting can be extremely powerful, for example, for comments on current affairs and events that call for a response besides the more pervasive journalistic forms. Social media has made poetry relevant again: the poems that go viral are often a response to big happenings in the world, as well as a manifestation of the worlding of literature that trespasses the traditional forms of circulation, distribution, and/or translation that constitute the more traditional notion of world literature. Indeed, what is the role of digital media and social media platforms in the crossing of national boundaries and institutionalized cultural industries? Is this time for revolutions or just an adaptation of intellectual labor now in the hands of the big five (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Google, and Microsoft)?

Conclusion

In his influential and authoritative book *What Is World Literature*? (2003), David Damrosch points out that the term was and remains highly elusive. What does it mean to speak of world literature? Which literature and whose world? "What relation to the national literatures whose production continued unabated even after Goethe announced their obsolescence? What new relations between Western Europe and the rest of the globe, between antiquity and modernity, between the nascent mass culture and elite productions?" (1).

To this line of questioning I have added the postcolonial intervention made by Pheng Cheah in adding another dimension to the notion of world

literature, as a cosmopolitan aspiration to envision and make new worlds, therefore, expressing and rendering worldliness through its literary imagination. Pursuing this line of thought, I have also emphasized the importance of digital technology, not as a tool that facilitates or accelerates the making and distributing of literature but as a narrative strategy that can achieve a worlding effect across boundaries and genres.

Blogging as advocacy, doors as passports/portals, and refugee poems as viral poetry constitute some of the new postcolonial worldliness that allow for a rethinking of here and there, individual and communal identities, borders and boundaries. This is due to the embedded role of digital technologies that are testimony to the continuum between the online and the offline in everyday practices, as well as to the use of technology to guarantee co-presence and continuity.

Though the novels and the poem discussed here deal with mobility and migration as a form of displacement, they also allow us to rethink the here and the elsewhere, origin and destination, along other coordinates. Hamid's fantasy trick of teleporting refugees to a better world through magic doors underscores the principle that the "world" is not what it used to be and that the cosmopolitan imaginary needs to be rethought as virtual and transient.

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PART IX

★

THE WORLDLY AND THE PLANETARY

44
Asylum Papers

GILLIAN WHITLOCK

Asylum

NOUN

1. The protection granted by a state to someone who has left their home country as a political refugee. . . .
   1.1. Shelter or protection from danger.

Origin
Late Middle English (in the sense of "place of refuge," especially for criminals): via Latin from Greek *asulon* "refuge," from *asulos* "inviolable," from *a-* "without" + *sulon* "right of seizure." Current uses date from the 18th century. (Lexico.com n.d.)

Border-Speaking

"Asylum" troubles literary and critical theory. What happens to "world literature" in times of mass migration and indefinite detention, when national borders are increasingly weaponized and surveilled, and as checkpoints proliferate to distinguish between self and other, citizen and alien? In response to this, Emily Apter suggests, key concepts of world literature must be reconsidered, to question their "border-speak": the use of "translation" as metaphor, and paradigms of "deep time," "spaces of flow," and post-national constellations. The soft, hospitable border of literary cartography in this way of speaking, she argues in *Against World Literature*, "forgets" the checkpoint in promoting the porous border (2013: 104). Linguistic "checkpoints," keywords in world literature, are rethought in a post-millennial context amidst a surge of national authoritarianism and mass migration, where *monde* (or "world") itself becomes a translation

With thanks to Phoebe King for her research on Behrouz Boochani's social media archive.

problem. Apter is not alone in worrying about the literary cartography of world literature. From a different perspective a decade earlier, Christopher Prendergast identified "migration" as the new buzzword that troubles literary geography and globalization theory: "while actual immigrants remain locked up in detention centres, the more fortunate can go in for fantasy-migration at will, trying on 'identities' in a manner akin to trying on hats" (2004: 1).

Earlier, these debates about the location of refugees in paradigms of world literature were provoked by Edward Said's essays and memoir. In "Reflections on Exile" Said contrasts the romanticized and aestheticized figure of the exile and the spectral presence of the refugee:

> To reflect on exiled Muslims from India, or Haitians in America, or Bikinians in Oceania, or Palestinians throughout the Arab world means that you must leave the modest refuge provided by subjectivity and resort instead to the abstractions of mass politics . . . Are they not manifestly and almost by design irrecoverable? (2000: 175)

In her extended analysis of Said's writings on exile, and his concepts of contrapuntal reading and nomadic vision, Caren Kaplan argues that it is only by historicizing refugee experience that this invisible category, these abstractions, can be recovered from the margins of criticism and literature (1996: 121). The literary exile is a romantic figure, located in an aestheticized world of creativity and loss, and frequently celebrated in cosmopolitan discourses, whereas refugees are both "undocumented" and "undocumentable," spectral presences "disappearing off the map of literature and culture" (121). Nor are asylum seekers readily accommodated in concepts such as "diaspora" and "hybridity," terms that overlook the particularity of forced migration. There is a solitariness and singularity to the asylum seeker and the refugee that eludes these terms, for they must make a case for asylum based on their particular circumstances of flight, a case that is subjected to rigorous interrogation (Woolley 2014: 17). In his memoir of childhood, *Out of Place*, Said lays the groundwork for thinking about "these undocumented people without a tellable history": "You must first set aside Joyce and Nabokov and think instead of the uncountable masses for whom UN agencies have been created" (1999: 175). Said recalls the new distinction that divided his family in 1948. The twelve-year-old Edward and his father and sister were protected from the politics of Palestine by "talismanic U.S. passports" that enabled them to cross customs and immigration checkpoints with some ease. Their mother, on the other hand, held a Palestinian passport and as a result her border

crossings were fraught: "grave looks and cautious accents," "explanations, short sermons, even warnings" and, as Said recalls, "the meaning of her anomalous existence was never explained to me as being a consequence of a shattering collective experience of dispossession" (118). This intimate experience of dispossession divides the family and threatens to separate them at every border crossing.

This chapter focuses on contemporary literature about refugees and asylum seekers, fictional and imaginative representations as well as forced migrants' representations of themselves in times when borders harden and contract, and walls are constructed across land and sea. To map this literary cartography, it draws on a distinction between etic and emic narratives that originates in anthropological research, where emic field-work is located from within the social group and from the perspective of the subject, and etic research is from the perspective of the observer (Sigona: 2014). In the first instance, it will turn to representations of refugees in Sean Tan's graphic narrative *The Arrival* and Mohsin Hamid's novel *Exit West*. Drawing on the concept of "hospitable narrative," the chapter will explore the ways in which these texts embody an aesthetics and ethics of recognition, accommodation, and solidarity with these historically marginalized subjects (Woolley 2014: 19). It then progresses to the borderlands of humanitarian storytelling, where hybrid forms of non/fiction "host" life-narratives of forced migrants. Drawing on a selection of recent collaborative projects that "translate" refugees' testimonial narratives variously, we find a literature that engages with the limits of empathy and compassion even as it bears witness to those who seek asylum. Finally, it will turn to an emic narrative, Behrouz Boochani's autobiographical novel *No Friend But the Mountain* and the collaborative translations that enable the circulation of this prison narrative by a Kurdish Iranian refugee in Australia. Emic and etic literatures occupy a threshold space in contemporary literature and literary theory, where representations of refugees are a work in progress that is open to new technologies and translations, from locations that "really need a lot of intellectual work" (2018: xv), as Boochani observes in a novel that he "thumbs" in Farsi and "posts" to a network of translators, collaborators, consultants, and advocates who translate them into paragraphs, prose, and poetry. In both emic and etic literatures of contemporary migration, "translation" is undergoing transformation, and this chapter will take a practice-led approach to these processes of translation.

The Moving Book

Shaun Tan's wordless graphic novel *The Arrival* creates a unique space of asylum in contemporary migration literature, as "a lost album from an alternative universe" (Tan 2007: 5). The cover simulates a treasured book, foxed and worn already. Images drawn in soft graphite pencil are arranged like photographs, ranging in tone from black and white to sepia, both realistic and abstract. The cover image captures a moment of contact: a man with a suitcase that holds all his worldly possessions looks with wonder, fear, and uncertainty at a small alien creature that looks back at him. Humans and creaturely things, realism and surrealism, coexist here. On the back cover, a question: "What drives so many to leave everything behind and journey alone to a mysterious country, a place without family or friends, where everything is nameless and the future is unknown?" (n.p.). The answer is the search for asylum, for refuge: "This silent graphic novel is the story of every migrant, every refugee, every displaced person, and a tribute to all those who have made the journey" (n.p.). Open the book, and the endpapers are startling. Inspired by images in the archives of the Ellis Island migration center in New York City, we see multiple passport-sized photographs drawn in realistic pencil chiaroscuros. Sixty faces look at us, men, women, and children, making eye contact. Each is individual, unique. Different ethnicities: Arab, Asian, European, African. Turbans, veils, scarfs, caps, and hats of all kinds signify multiple faiths and cultural traditions. These faces summon our attention; they are watching us as we read. Asylum seekers are vulnerable: faces are decisively pinned to identities and available for discipline and control (Edkins 2015: 9), and checkpoints are mapped onto moving bodies in border zones. Equally, portraiture of the face can summon empathy. The title page of *The Arrival* is cryptic: on a faded and yellowed page there are stamps, inspection cards, visas, and many languages, and the title of the book itself is unintelligible, in a fake alphabet invented for the book. Readers are pulled into a strange and foreign world of migrants and refugees, in this worldly book that seeks a metaphorical and imaginary representation of migration and belonging, that has now been reprinted many times, and that is uniquely open to translation, given it uses the silent language of images and requires "little more than a title change" to move across worlds, as Tan suggests (2010: 6). There is a substantial secondary literature on the reception of Tan's graphic novel in classrooms and curricula transnationally now that speaks to the transits and pedagogic functions of this unique book which is grounded in extensive historical research and anecdotal accounts of migrants (Arizpe, Colomer, and Martinez-Roldan 2014).

The art of graphic narrative incubates a distinctive "worldliness" that makes demands on readers. This new literary genre, the wordless graphic novel, orchestrates reading with its unique spatial grammar of images and frames and a vocabulary of color and space to elicit an aesthetic and emotional response. This inventive textual practice generates forms of verbal-visual witnessing that "travel fast across the globe." Hillary Chute introduces "inhabitation" as a key concept to describe graphic narrative's connection to worldmaking: "[v]isually representing space, and evoking and rendering space aesthetically through a series of stylized marks that constitute a narrative universe, graphic narrative produce worlds to be inhabited by the reader" (2016: 263). More than this, these "worlds" turn to ethical encounters with others, for there is a hospitality and openness to creaturely things and engagements with strangeness in the gutters and frames of graphic narratives.

Shaun Tan's "moving" book encounters strangeness in a variety of ways. The reader of *The Arrival* is displaced no less than the asylum seeker. In *Sketches from a Nameless Land*, a volume of sketches and working notes that describes the evolution of the book, Tan emphasizes that the absence of culturally specific characters and the incomprehensible language places readers in the mind of the protagonist: "*We* are the new arrival, only able to decipher meaning and value from visual images, object relationships and human gestures . . . Imagination here is more useful than knowledge" (2010:11). As a new literary genre, the wordless graphic novel creates possibilities. Graphic storytelling facilitates visual witnessing, and the changing layout of gutters and frames on the pages changes the tempo of reading at every turn – there is an intimacy to reading hand-drawn marks on the printed page (Chute 2016: 10). Readers must work to produce closure across the multiple gutters and frames of the endpapers, whereas the single image of a splash page – a spectacular sepia image of the reunion of the family, for example – creates a sigh of relief, and a release of emotion. *The Arrival* introduces new possibilities for translation in the borderlands of the literature of asylum, and purposely so. Tan's graphic art pays homage to Francisco Goya's foundational sketches of trauma and suffering as well as Italian neorealist cinema, and his soft graphite drawings not only document experiences of migration drawing on historical sources but also capture an "abstracted reality: another world that floats captivatingly above our own" (2010: 42). In this way, his speculative approach exemplifies a recurrent feature of the etic literature and art of asylum: estrangement, magical thinking, and thresholds where fact and fiction engage.

In *Exit West*, his mystical novel short-listed for the Booker Prize in 2016, Mohsin Hamid creates a "porous border," by "relaxing the laws of physics' in his fictional world way" (quoted in Tait 2017): doors open up all over the globe, Narnia-like portals allowing immediate passage from one place to another, a passage that is both a death, and rebirth. The novel is historical – inspired by the events of the previous year, when migrants arrived on beaches across the Mediterranean, in train stations in the midst of European cities, and were sequestered in makeshift camps at hastily erected borders. It is also mystical: desperate people are miraculously transported from death traps in violent cities by doors that allow open access to Sydney, Tokyo, Mykonos, London. This translation of apocalyptic news images and stories of refugees on the move from journalism to the novel introduces magical thinking, and narrative devices that reconfigure time and space. The novel reads "like a fabulist's prolegomenon for the twenty-first century" (Zanganeh, cited in Preston 2018: n.p.), a fiction that "moves seamlessly" across the language of the fable, the human rights report, and the prayer (Tait 2017). In this it is inspired by the social media networks that connect these asylum seekers in a virtual world, where they connect to others immediately and intimately.

Only two characters are named in this novel in which proper nouns are rarely used: the protagonists Saeed and Nadia, lovers who meet in an unnamed city in times of violence, where checkpoints proliferate and borders multiply: "One's relationship to windows changed. A window was a border through which death was possibly most likely to come" (Hamid 2018: 68). Darkening skies are populated with drones and flying robots, invisible machines carry out perpetual surveillance in cities where militias are on the move and music is banned. In this world, planetary thinking opens other perspectives on time and space: via the portals that circumvent national boundaries, the couple cross from this generic death-world and go west, to arrive at a beach, on the Greek island of Mykonos, and then on to "Dark London." Here location switches from the allegorical to the historical, in a dystopian city that is a possible future of the present metropolis: a million migrants have arrived in the city, and squatters create communities in unoccupied mansions in Kensington and Chelsea, the great expanses of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens have filled up with tents and rough shelters, and between Westminster and Hammersmith legal residents are in a minority, and native-born are few, "with local newspapers referring to the area as the worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nation" (126). Tracking proper nouns is critical when reading *Exit West*. Dark London, for example, is imminent in cities we now inhabit.

Hamid's omniscient narrator is located in a distant future, looking back on past days. The address to a cosmopolitan reader familiar with this cityscape ushers in a possible future, where nativist extremists set out to "reclaim Britain for Britain," migrants are consigned to ghettos surrounded by militia, under surveillance of drones and helicopters once again, and "the social media chatter was of a coming night of shattered glass" (132). This estranged world is not so remote from the present, when appeals to restrict migration in terms of racial and ethnic identities become explicit, borders are fortified, and walls divide seas into migration zones. It also invokes history, and the Holocaust memory of Kristallnacht. As etic representation, the utopian novel infects and inflects thinking about the present, with its potential for both utopic and dystopic outcomes. Here, the "battle of London" is averted; decency and bravery prevail as the native forces step back from the brink:

> Perhaps that had decided they did not have it in them to do what would have needed to be done, to corral and bloody and where necessary slaughter the migrants . . . Perhaps they had grasped that the doors could not be closed . . . they had understood that the denial of coexistence would have required one party to cease to exist, and the extinguishing party too would have been transformed in the process. (164)

In *Exit West* magical portals displace the traumatic crossing of land and sea as the focus of attention, and this literary cartography troubles reviewers of the novel, recalling Apter's questioning of the ethics of porous borders in literary cartographies (Tait 2017). However, Hamid's novel draws on enduring traditions of utopian writing, a threshold genre that thrives in these borderlands between fiction and nonfiction. Like sci fi, fantasy, myth, and folktale, utopia is an estranged genre that transforms the everyday world. What distinguishes this "other" world from these other genres of fantasy is that it is immanent in the world of human endeavor, not transcendental (Suvin 1979: 45). The formation of utopian and dystopian societies is within the bounds of human agency, as the culmination of either the best or worst elements of contemporary society. The real question raised by the refugee crisis of 2015, Mohsin Hamid wrote at the time, is "not whether the people of the countries of Europe wish to accept more refugees" but "whether they wish their countries to become the sorts of societies that are capable of taking the steps that will be required to stop the flow of migration" (quoted in Tait 2017). The novel is poised at exactly that threshold moment, between worlds, each immanent in the present.

Hospitable Literature

The Arrival and *Exit West* suggest ways of thinking about "hospitable narrative." Etic literature can open spaces of ethical engagement, where the demand to imagine the other and their circumstances can be met. As Agnes Woolley points out, texts that are about border crossing also cross representational borders and are innovative in their generic composition (2014: 3). In his lectures collected in *Of Hospitality*, Jacques Derrida speculates about new technology and the possibilities for transformations of public space at the borders between citizen and noncitizen, foreign and non-foreign. Provoked by the violent imposition of new laws on immigrants and "sans-papiers" in France in 1996, Derrida's thinking on hospitality is provoked by the presence of asylum seekers, and the urgent question of what arrives at the borders in the presence of the stranger, the foreigner. Unconditional hospitality is foundational to ethics; however, pragmatic conditions set limits to the rights of hospitality, and these two sets of obligations remain unreconciled. Drawing on Derrida's lectures in her readings of representations of asylum seekers in contemporary British fiction, Woolley suggests that these novels become the staging ground for an ethical engagement and hospitable response to refugees (2014: 23). So, for example, the trope of narrator as host in Graham Swift's novel *The Light of Day* introduces the narrator as "host" to the story of Kristina, a refugee from the war in Croatia, and this narrator's limitations in interpreting her unfamiliar presence is essential to the diegesis of the novel. Alternatively, suggests Woolley, Caryl Phillips's "hosting" of the story of David Oluwale in *A Distant Shore* adopts a hybrid narrative strategy where fictionalization becomes an ethical act to draw on the imagination to bring unknowable experience to light, and to create a space of encounter. A similar strategy structures Henning Mankell's novel *The Shadow Girls*, where the flawed narrator Jesper Humlin sets out to write a novel based on the "real voices" of immigrant girls in Sweden, allowing Mankell to both narrate their stories and question the ethics of humanitarian storytelling.

Emic and etic literatures engage in these generic borderlands of literary cartography. Mankell's novel is in fact based on true stories, as he reveals in the Afterword. The "characters" are real, "What their actual names are doesn't matter. What matters is their story" (Mankell 2012: n.p.). Here the testimonial narratives of refugees find asylum in humanitarian storytelling, where their experiences are "hosted" by novelists, editors, and activists. This is a literature of witness, "hosting" and documenting the testimony of the undocumented, and one of the most prolific genres in the literature of "human rights and

narrated lives" (Schaffer and Smith 2004). However, as hospitality is limited and partial, so too is the accommodation of asylum seekers in "hospitable books" that incubate refugee narratives. For example, Dave Eggers's novel *What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng* (2006) performs a "hosting" of refugee story focusing on the trope of the journey. The narrating "I" of the novel is "Valentino," a survivor of the vast refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya: Pinyudo, Lokichoggio, and Kakoma. The voice of the refugee narrator of the novel, the character "Valentino," is a hybrid creation of fiction and autobiography, witness and amanuensis. The novel begins with a "Foreword" by Valentino Achak Deng that explains their collaborative process, where the novelist Eggers "hosts" his story and testifies to his own agency in this process of fictionalizing his voice. Eggers creates a metafiction of the refugee story that reflects on concerns about the limits of humanitarian storytelling, and the commodification of African suffering in representations of refugees. The exhaustion of the "Lost Boys" and "Child Soldier" testimonial narratives in metropolitan markets, where "compassion fatigue" alienates readers, is integral to the art of the narrative. As a niche market in a global culture industry, these narratives that accrue value and become generic are highly marketable as the "postcolonial exotic" (Brouillette 2007; Huggan 2001) that appeals to the well-meaning pity of neoliberal sentimentality. In Eggers's novel a fiction of testimony responds to concerns that beset representations of refugees: their presence as "silent emissaries" and the pressure on subaltern subjects to tell the recognizable story that can speak on behalf of many. Here the ethical questions around and about humanitarian storytelling are essential to the art of the novel.

Elsewhere, Dave Eggers sponsors humanitarian narratives about those whose civil and human rights have been violated as a series editor, in McSweeney's "Voice of Witness" series. In *Underground America: Narratives of Undocumented Lives*, a collection of oral histories of immigration experience in the USA published in this series, editor Peter Orner turns to one of the tropes of humanitarian storytelling: his faith in the reader "prepared to walk in someone else's shoes for a while" (2008: 8). However, as a novelist, Eggers reminds us that metropolitan readers are fickle witnesses, often passive, reluctant to recognize the complicity and responsibility for distant others, and ethical issues abound in humanitarian storytelling. James Dawes elaborates on these in his essays on bearing witness to human rights abuse and humanitarian crises: How do we create surrogate voices? How must the stories of survivors of trauma be translated, edited, and rewritten in the vocabulary of human rights institutions and advocates that sponsor this literature? For refugees in particular, the "asylum" of humanitarian storytelling and the risks of voicing their experiences

are problematic given the function of truth-telling in refugee status determination processes where refugees are required to narrate their experiences to justify their claim for asylum in carefully structured terms set out in the Refugee Convention. Both literary and legal technologies are entangled in this "asylum story," "an idealized version of refugeehood on which the civic incorporation of the asylum seeker depends and which circulates in a narrative economy that sets the terms for the enunciation of refugee experience" (Woolley 2017: 378).

The hospitality of humanitarian storytelling is necessarily, then, caught up in negotiations between citizen and noncitizen, and transactions of testimony and witness. We see this in humanitarian storytelling in response to recent mass migrations. The novelist Richard Flanagan traveled in Lebanon, Greece, and Serbia in January 2016 as a guest of World Vision to report on the borderlands where Syrian refugees were on the move in to Europe.

Flanagan was accompanied by the artist Ben Quilty, as well as a translator and a videographer. Flanagan and Quilty bear witness to an historical event that Flanagan describes as epic: the "great exodus of our age," "Old Testament in its stories, epic in scale, inconceivable until you witness it." Flanagan's essay *Notes on an Exodus* (2016) was published in a Vintage Special Edition book, with illustrations by Quilty. But the small, sextodecimo pages and large font of the hard copy edition are incomparable to the multimedia essay that appeared online in the *Guardian* just a few weeks after Flanagan returned from the Middle East. Flanagan's prose comes alive on the screen and incorporates graphic embedded texts: film clips from the refugee camps in Bekaa valley in Lebanon, live testimonial by refugees, Quilty's sketches, and photographs of refugees in camps and on beaches from photojournalists and press agencies. In the margins of the essay online, there are links to other affiliated refugee stories: "How Alan Kurdi's death changed the world," "Cemetery of souls: the refugee crisis on Lesbos."

Techno-Mediating Humanitarianism

New technologies transform humanitarian storytelling. *Notes on an Exodus* is crafted for the screen: composed in brief vignettes and "notes," each a single haunting story of loss; Quilty's sketches are skeletal and haunted representations. On Lesbos Yasmin grieves for the baby lost in the ocean crossing; the child Ibrahim in a transit center in north Serbia, who "has the look of a medieval child beggar" (Flanagan 2016: 5); Raghdaa who creates colorful beaded dresses in the Lebanese camp in the Bekaa Valley. Later Ben Quilty

displays nine of Raghdaa's wedding dresses created in the camp as well as an installation made from life jackets abandoned on the high-water mark on the beaches of Kea and Lesbos as part of the Art Gallery of South Australia's *Sappers and Shrapnel* exhibition showcasing "art made from the discards of war." Both Quilty's art and Flanagan's essay draw on an aesthetics of waste that recurs in contemporary representations of refugees: in Jason de Leon's "State of Exception" exhibit that tracks migrants crossing the Sonoma desert following the trail of discarded backpacks and water bottles they leave behind, for example, and Ai Weiwei's installation also using discarded life jackets from Lesbos at the Konzerthaus in Berlin in February 2016. "Refugees," writes Zygmunt Bauman, "the human waste of the global frontier-land," are the "outsiders incarnate" that are corralled into "nowhere places," "waste disposal sites" (2004: 80). With a novelist's eye for detail, Flanagan captures the bizarre contradictions of the refugee camps where Syrians gather: the fumes of formaldehyde, phenol, and cyanide from the cast-iron heaters, the scrounged timbers and motley of plastics, and the ubiquitous smartphones that even the starving possess (2016: 10).

This multimedia essay disseminated and archived online by the *Guardian* animates dynamic visual and verbal testimony and witness. It recalibrates the metrics of authenticity of humanitarian storytelling, as new technologies enable unprecedented visual and verbal access to the experiences of these refugees on the move across the borderlands of Europe in real time. Ethical questions that haunt humanitarian narrative recur here. Digital testimony and witness may feed the hunger for images and stories of suffering with ever more graphic and vivid testimony, and they can accelerate the speed and reach of humanitarian storytelling, but do they have the capacity to cultivate affect – empathy and moral responsibility – in first world publics? The moral problems associated with complicity in the reporting in photojournalism and war correspondence, and in associated fiction and nonfiction, and the questions of who profits from these narratives, travel along with multimedia essays such as *Notes on an Exodus*. On screen at the *Guardian* site are not only affiliated refugee stories but also online advertising using behaviorial retargeting to market specific consumer goods using cookies lodged in the user's Web browser. This bespoke marginalia highlights "structural, built-in problems" and the "moral risk" of producing and consuming humanitarian storytelling that James Dawes identifies: these online narratives inspire social activism, and they are valuable exotic products in the marketing and consumption of goods.

World literature in the hoary canonical sense is embedded in these mediated translations of asylum seekers' experiences for first world publics.

Flanagan's turn to the Old Testament narrative as metaphor in humanitarian storytelling recurs in accounts of the mass migration of Syrian refugees in 2016, and it renders current events on an "epic" scale by returning to "great books" of the Western tradition. The prize-winning BBC documentary *Exodus: Our Journey to Europe* also turns to the biblical narrative of the journey to the promised land as "our" journey, and here too new technologies enable unprecedented intimacy as the refugees use smartphones to film journeys translated into tropes of seeking asylum in the promised land. "Great books" of the Western canon inhabit humanitarian storytelling and render contemporary mass migration intelligible, calibrating historic scales of interpretation for events we witness in the mass media. Elsewhere, Homer's *Odyssey* creates a framework for a story on the European refugee crisis, and a collaboration between writers and asylum seekers in *Refugee Tales* (2016) draws structurally on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, narrating the experiences of asylum seekers in British detention centers in terms of the pilgrimage. The *Refugee Tales* project included an "occupation of landscape" as spectacle: a walk following ancient pathways in southern England in solidarity with detainees, with oral performances of the "tales" by the writers along the way. As translation, the *Tales* suggests something more than assimilation is occurring when humanitarian storytelling turns to Chaucer, Homer, and the Old Testament in bearing witness to asylum seekers. An intervention in the reproduction and reception of these canonical texts can ensue. So, for example, as writers reengaged with Chaucer, "the father of English poetry," through collaboration with detainees, they found a more complicated political geography that led to rereadings of national space in this canonical English book. Now, the fate of the Italian Princess in Chaucer's "Man of Laws Tale" – who is taken to Syria and then banished by being set adrift on the Mediterranean before arriving in Northumbria, where she is falsely accused of a crime – gathers new resonance and poignancy (*Refugee Tales* 2016: 139).

The Author "*Sans Papier*": Behrouz Boochani

In the Afterword to *Refugee Tales*, activist David Herd remarks that, for the person who visits a detention center in the UK, it is striking that one is not allowed to carry a pen and paper into the building (2016: 140). Emic literature emerging from the camps and detention centers now thrives in networks of production and reception that include carceral constraints such as this. A unique and paperless literature is emerging from the Australian offshore camps now. Richard Flanagan identifies the "Nauru Files," a cache of leaked

incident reports, as Australian short stories, for example, and in her inaugural lecture as the Boisbouvier chair of Australian Literature, Alexis Wright acknowledges Behrouz Boochani as an Australian writer (Flanagan 2016; Wright 2018). It is Behrouz Boochani, Derrida's "stranger at the border," who returns to the critical question that preoccupies Mohsin Hamid in *Exit West*: what becomes of citizens in the sorts of societies that are capable of taking the steps that will be required to stop the flow of migration?

The Kurdish refugee Behrouz Boochani "thumbs" his 400-page autobiographical novel *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* (2018a) on a smartphone. The extensive paratexts include the "Translator's Tale," written by Omid Tofighian (2018b), who is located in Sydney, Manus Island, and Cairo. This "Tale" explains that translation works differently here, in the cartography of refugees' resistance literature. Boochani is a prolific writer who chronicles his experiences of indefinite detention on Manus in multiple genres. He is internationally recognized as a journalist, published in the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, and the *Huffington Post*. He writes a "Diary" that chronicles intimately and urgently the occupation of the camp in October 2017 (Boochani 2017b; Whitlock 2018b), and he also writes a "A Letter from Manus Island" that becomes a manifesto for a resistance initiated by the refugees there (Boochani 2017a). In collaboration with the Iranian filmmaker Arash Kamali Sarvestani, who lives in the Iranian diaspora in Eindhoven, he co-produces a documentary film from within the camp, *Chauka, Please Tell Us the Time* (Boochani and Sarvestani 2017), that Boochani films on his Galaxy S6 smartphone. He also sustains a series of social media feeds on Twitter (his handle is on the cover of the Picador edition of the novel) and Facebook that cultivate his presence as a significant public intellectual in transnational networks of human rights activism.

A "strange and terrible book," Flanagan calls Boochani's *No Friend but the Mountains* in his foreword. This novel, like Tan's, transforms thinking on translation and asylum, and is generically innovative. The story behind the translation of *No Friend but the Mountains* is, the chief translator Tofigian suggests, a framing narrative for the book itself, grounded in traditional and contemporary storytelling practices of Iranian peoples, and Kurdish indigenous knowledges and traditions. The translation is a literary experimentation, involving author, translators, consultants, and confidants in a passionate and transnational philosophical activity. Planning, writing, and translation were simultaneous and interactive, a shared philosophical project, writes Tofigian (2018b: xxxiv). Boochani used WhatsApp to send messages that were converted into PDFs by associates who prepared full chapters for Tofigian, the

principal translator. Boochani writes in Farsi, the language of his oppressors, drawing on Kurdish literature and resistance, Persian literature, and Manus Island's cultural worlds. During the process of "thumbing" this autobiographical novel, he was reading Kafka, Camus, and Beckett; however, his novel expands the cartography of world literature dramatically. Translation becomes a process of accrual, generative and collaborative, producing a literature authorized by new technologies, and diasporic networks that connect Sydney, Cairo, and Manus Island to engineer this unique Australian-Persian literary text.

Boochani writes of his journey as an odyssey, stalled in the brutal limbo zone of the Manus prison that he presents as ludicrous theater: absurd and grotesque, poetic and magical, farce and fable. "Can I please ask what your discipline is?" Boochani enquires in his early conversations with his translator Tofighian. "Mine is political science . . . but I think that the realities of this place can be better exposed through the language of art and literature" (2018b: 360). This stakes a radical claim for the authority possessed by refugees in indefinite detention to create insights and critical tools for analyzing the logic of border politics, and for the novel as an instrument of resistance. It is the limited experience and imagination of beneficiaries with citizen privileges that remains problematic in the dissemination and reception of this emic literature.

Flanagan's foreword to *No Friend but the Mountains* places it on the shelf of world prison literature, alongside Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*, Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, Wole Soyinka's *The Man Died*, and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. He also locates it in a national tradition of carceral writing in Australian Literature that includes his own Booker Prize-winning novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. This chapter expands the genre of world prison literature to locate Boochani's novel in a twenty-first-century tradition of asylum literature emerging from the carceral archipelago of "black sites." These offshore locations evade public scrutiny and accountability, enabling insidious violence against refugees and asylum seekers to be exercised with impunity. Located in formerly colonized territories, they continue to exploit and extract resources as commercial operations by transnational private contractors. The construction of the Pacific Regional Processing Centres (RPCs) on Nauru and Manus late in 2001 coincided with the establishment of the Guantánamo facility. Boochani describes these camps in the south as an Australian Guantánamo.

Boochani's autobiographical novel is, like Mohamedou Ould Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary*, a narrative where the violence of indefinite detention at

a black site marks the text.[1] Boochani's principal translator, Omid Tofighian, suggests the conditions of its production are so horrific that radically new sets of concepts, methods, and criteria are required for interpretation. Tofighian positions *No Friend* as prison narrative, philosophical fiction, transnational literature, decolonial writing, Iranian political art, and Kurdish literature. Boochani himself locates his writing with his characteristic surreal and rhetorical style:

> two islands are polar opposites. One island kills vision, creativity and knowledge – it imprisons thought. The other island fosters vision, creativity and knowledge – it is the land where the mind is free.
>
> The first island is the settler-colonial state called Australia, and the prisoners are the settlers.
>
> The second island contains Manus Prison, and knowledge resides there with the incarcerated refugees. (2018a: 360)

When *No Friend but the Mountains* was published in 2018, Boochani had been a refugee in detention on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, for five years. He arrived in the Australian migration zone by boat in July 2013, "exactly four days after they effected a merciless law," he tells us (89). This law mandated that all asylum seekers who arrived by boat would be transferred to indefinite offshore detention at one of the two Pacific RPCs funded by the Australian government, on Manus Island and Nauru.[2] By 2018, Boochani is a public intellectual with a proper name and face, and a significant presence in international networks of humanitarian and human rights activism. He is the absent writer honored by PEN International, and the recipient of Amnesty International's Australia Media Award in 2017 for his reportage from Manus. "Reporters without Borders" keep watch on Boochani as a human rights activist and journalist at risk. With Arash Sarvestani, the Iranian director and his collaborator in the Netherlands, he is co-director of *Chauka, Please Tell Us the Time*, an art house documentary filmed with a smartphone in the camp. Boochani is a charismatic presence in a transnational literary intelligentsia, appearing via Skype at literary festivals

1 The foundation of the Researchers Against Pacific Black Sites (RAPBS [Perera and Pugliese n.d.]) collective promotes decolonizing research methodologies that respond to the reopening of the Pacific camps on Manus and Nauru. As one of its founders, Suvendrini Perera, suggests, the name of the collective explicitly draws attention to the links between Australia's offshore camps and facilities such as Camp X-Ray and Camp Delta on Guantánamo (2018: 106).

2 Following the determination of the Papua New Guinea Supreme Court that the RPC was unconstitutional, it was closed in October 2017, and the men were relocated to detention facilities near the town of Lorengau.

and research seminars from Sydney and Adelaide to Oxford and Cairo. While witnessing may be crucial for the psychological survival of detainees, it has limited capacity to effect policy change. A punitive border policing regime maintains substantial public support in Australia despite extensive documentary evidence of the suffering of the refugees who remain on Manus and Nauru. However, the infrastructure of Australian literature and the literary intelligentsia transnationally remains one of the locations where pro-refugee sentiment finds institutional expression in sustained campaigns and human rights activism. For example, the English curriculum and Australian children's literature are a focus of human rights activism and campaigns for social justice and the rights of the child (Whitlock 2018a).

Behrouz Boochani was born in a small village near Ilam, in western Iran. He and his family are ethnic Kurds, a stateless people and a persecuted minority in much of the Middle East. After graduating with a university degree in political science and geopolitics in Tehran (paratexts to the novel indicate his familiarity with reflections on hegemony and resistance by Foucault, Gramsci, and Zizek), he co-founded a Kurdish-language magazine, *Werya*, where his writing about Kurdish autonomy led to interrogation and risk of detention. Boochani left Iran and made his way through Southeast Asia to Indonesia, where asylum seekers gather and connect with smugglers who trade in perilous voyages to Australia. The early chapters of *No Friend but the Mountains* are a harrowing account of Boochani's two attempts to reach Australia by boat, and the final rescue by the Australian Navy after being lost at sea: "I was traumatised by the sea," he writes (2018a: 92). In "The Raft of Purgatory / Moons Will Tell Terrible Truths," his characteristic direct appeal to the reader to "imagine me" are presented in blank verse, and the metaphoric and visceral language of his distinctive autobiographical voice:

> I can feel it in me
> I can feel everything
> I can feel how my digestive system functions
> I can feel it with precision
> My body is on the verge of collapse
> I can feel my bones (2018a: 52)

The deep time of Kurdish and Iranian traditions remain alive in the novel. Boochani refuses to use proper names for the asylum seekers who accompany him on the voyage, and so he travels in the company of "Azadeh," the woman's name cognate with the Farsi word for freedom, and the magnificent "Golshifteh," named in tribute to the Iranian actress in exile. Throughout the

novel only two characters have "proper" names: Reza Barati and Hamid Khazaei, both refugees who die on Manus during Boochani's first year in detention there, 2014. For Boochani, naming is a critical element in the dehumanization of asylum seekers, an essential tool in its systemic violence and, it follows, in refugee resistance. He responds in kind, renaming the RPC as a "prison" and his writing and art as "prison literature."

Two scenes preoccupy Boochani, and he returns to them repeatedly in his autobiographical writing. Like all asylum seekers in the Pacific RPC, he is immediately dehumanized and transformed "into someone else," a spectacle, on arrival at the Christmas Island RPC. His proper name is replaced by a boat number, MEG45; he is "degraded" by clothes that signal his abject status, and transported to Manus in a scene documented and witnessed by the "ruthless" cameras of journalists.[3] In the chapter "A Christmas (Island) Tale / A Stateless Rohingya Boy Sent Away to Follow the Star of Exile," Boochani narrates his subjection to "the securitised gaze" and the pervasive surveillance of CCTV cameras. "The deal is that we have to be a warning, a lesson for people who want to seek protection in Australia" (92).[4] Journalists are strategically positioned to photograph the detainees as abject: "They gaze at me, witnessing my appearance, witnessing the way I look right at this moment . . . I have been degraded in no uncertain terms" (99). Boochani refuses to become a spectacle, "I despised the fact that people would end up feeling sorry for me and cry as a result of witnessing me there in that state, and through that medium" (92). Later, Boochani challenges this "ruthless" camera and its spectacular rhetorics in *Remain* (2018), a video and photographic installation created in collaboration with the Iranian Australian photographer Hoda Afshar. *Remain* reflects on the erotic and spiritual impact of Boochani's presence – referencing, for example, his physical resemblance to the Messiah in an audacious restaging of the Pietà on a remote beach on Manus.[5] *Remain* also includes Afshar's prize-winning *Portrait of Behrouz Boochani, Manus Island, 2018*. Reflecting on the *Portrait* in his essay "This Human Being" (2018b), Boochani returns again to the humiliation of the

3 Boochani rehearses this in one of his earliest autobiographical essays, "Becoming MEG45," translated by Moones Mansoubi, posted on Facebook, and published in *Mascara Literary Review* (2015). This is an early draft of the account that appears in Chapter 5 of the novel.

4 The cartoons of "Eaten Fish," the internationally acclaimed Iranian cartoonist in detention on Manus named Ali Doorani, capture the surveillance of CCTV cameras and the pevasive "securitised gaze" throughout the camp graphically.

5 Facebook followers often comment on Boochani's resemblance to the Messiah, and he reflects on this implicitly in *Remain* and explicitly in the essay "For Six Months I Was Jesus" (2017c).

"weaponised cameras" that "de-identify" refugees, attempting to "capture an image of a refugee that evokes the most heightened sense of compassion possible."[6] In Afshar's *Portrait* he sees a critique of the "hackneyed impression of a refugee that has become idealised around the world," where he is "fully aware of the image-making process and active in its production" . . . "I think that what has been created in this world is the emergence of a new language and a fresh point of view regarding refugees, one that foregrounds their humanity" (Boochani 2018b). This is no less true of his autobiographical novel.

The second scene that preoccupies Boochani is the death of his friend Reza Barati, a young Kurdish Iranian man who was killed during rioting at the Manus Island RPC in Papua New Guinea on February 14, 2014, just six months after they were transported from Christmas Island.[7] In *Chauka, Please Tell Us the Time*, the men gather evidence and present their eyewitness accounts of the riots the night Barati died. The death of Barati, the "Gentle Giant," is narrated in a different mode in the final traumatic chapter of the *No Friend but the Mountains*, "In Twilight / The Colours of War." Throughout this literature and art of witness, across multiple modes and media, Boochani translates his prison narratives and these scenes of trauma into autobiographical genres, modes, and media strategically. For example, a series of biographical sketches of men in the camp in the the *Guardian* and on Facebook are micro-histories that affirm their specific histories and identities as fathers, sons, and husbands; the "Diary of a Disaster" (2017b) documents the occupation of the camp that ended in forcible eviction by security forces in November 2017; in essays he experiments with his different writing persona – "Becoming MEG 45," for example, reflects on his identification by boat number in the detention regime; the grey literature of Human Rights Reports draw on Boochani's role as a spokesperson for the community on Manus, as well as the men, women, and children on Nauru; the "Letter from Manus Island" (2017a) articulates his poetic and decolonial manifesto of resistance, "Manus Prison Theory."[8] These autobiographical acts are

6 Afshar's *Portrait of Behrouz Boochani* won the prestigious Bowness Photography Prize in 2018.

7 As of July 19, 2013, all asylum seekers who arrived by boat were subjected to mandatory and indefinite offshore detention, with no prospect of settlement in Australia. Even if they were found to be genuine refugees, they would be offered resettlement in PNG. Later, following an exchange agreement with the US government, some were relocated to the USA. Reza Barati, like Behrouz Boochani, arrived in July 2013, just a few days after the implementation of this policy.

8 Perera is drawing on Nicholas Mirzoeff's analysis of Black Lives Matter here, and his turn to Hannah Arendt's prior theorization of the space of appearance as "the space where politics happens." See Mirzoeff 2017.

contingent and conditional, agile and strategic, opportunistic and wired through changing discursive connections, platforms, and coalitions to appeal to witnessing publics, those temporary collectives hailed through address, encouraged into an active engagement and responsibility with what they see (Torchin 2012: 14). As we see in his reflections on Afshar's *Portrait*, Boochani refuses to consent to the humanitarian gaze and deliberately dismisses the spectacular rhetorics of the "refugee industry" identified by his translator Tofighian. Consistent across these autobiographical modes and genres is Boochani's critique of representations of refugees as the Other and the subject of humanitarian "rescue" narratives: "a being without agency, a being without personhood, a being without the nuances and complexities that constitute the human condition, a being without power, a being without free and independent identity" (2018b). Now, the moniker "Behrouz" captures his pervasive presence as a humanitarian icon, a "cyberlebrity," a public intellectual, and a constant presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Skype, where he engages with both fans (liking, friending, retweeting, following) and trolls ("thank you for the inspiration").

This autobiographical authorship is enabled by an extraordinary assemblage of human and nonhuman agents: a network of collaborators, companions, translators and the affordances of smartphones, WhatsApp, Skype, email. The novel is "thumbed" in Farsi on a phone and smuggled out of Manus in the form of thousands of text messages. Ironically it is a nonhuman agent, the smartphone, that is the most vulnerable link in this network. Boochani's first phone was confiscated, and another stolen; during periods of extreme securitization and surveillance that police the Manus prison, the phone was hidden in a cavity deep within his mattress (2018a: xxxiii). This process of translation that carries texts across platforms, languages, locations, and readers, shuttling from Manus to Sydney and Cairo, has been technologically feasible only in the recent past. It challenges translation as we know it, creating new possibilities and spaces for political activism by and about refugees. Behrouz wrote his whole book through messaging, Tofighian recalls in the "Translator's Tale" in paratexts to the novel, sending long passages of text in Farsi to translator Moones Mansoubi via WhatsApp, who then translated it into PDFs of full chapters in English. The full draft of each of Behrouz's chapters first appears in a long text message with no paragraph breaks. It was this feature that created a "unique and intellectually stimulating space for literary experimentation and shared philosophical activity" (2018a: xvi). As principal translator, for example, it was Tofighian who

crafted the writing into blank verse and prose in the course of a collaborative translation process in English and Farsi.

We can map how Boochani deliberately reached out from the prison to create this network that enables his authorship by returning to early Facebook posts as well as the paratexts of the novel. Boochani began to assemble the network that translates his writing from Farsi to English late in 2014, that traumatic year of the riots in the prison where Barati died, by making contact with the social activist Janet Galbraith, the founder of "Writing through Fences," an online project that collaborates with writers and artists in immigration detention, who began to communicate with him in 2014. A key moment in his appearance on Facebook in English is a post in March 2015 using the pen name "bwchany." He posts a reference to media coverage of the death of Barati. Shortly after, in June 2015, a series of postings translated from Farsi by the in-line Facebook translation tool record "bwchany's" enduring grief and anger in broken English that is nevertheless visceral and precedes the metaphorical language to come:

> These days I feel angry more than anything . . . For long hours, I walk around the fence of this f* prison and listen music, and I am listening to the coffee . . . that goes down from my tired intestine. (Facebook 19/6/15)

This mechanical translation captures the beginnings of his "Prison Notes" in English online: "Here in this prison, I have to make my life a bitter melody . . . In these notes I will try to find some balm . . . In the past years of my life, my life is not a witness" (25/6/15). The autobiographical voice of the witness from the camp in *No Friend* is audible here (in the blank verse of "I can feel it in me," for example).

These first postings by "bwchany" are not auspicious: there are few "comments," "likes," or "shares" on Facebook, and the pen name disappears shortly afterwards. However, this is a critical moment in a transition to posting on Facebook in English and the formation of a network that will enable his authorship. From the very beginning his enduring grief and mourning, and the urgency to recognize refugees as "grievable life," are apparent. A few months later, on October 5, 2015, Boochani is at work with Moones Mansoubi, who translates his writing not only from Farsi to English but also from text messages into PDFs. An acceleration of Boochani's writing is evident in Facebook archives. Later that month a "Long Post" addressed "To the Australian People" signed by "Behrouz Boochani journalist and human rights defender" appears on Facebook, and shortly after the first version of "Becoming MEG45," his account of the humiliation of transportation to

Manus, which is then published in an online literary journal. In early 2016 another vital link is established, as Boochani and his principal translator, Omid Tofighian, connect. They share key elements of the ideological and cultural coordinates of Boochani's autobiographical identity and practice: an Iranic cultural heritage with strong attachments to Kurdish traditions that remain alive in the diaspora. In the "Tale" Tofighian recalls that an immersion in rituals of grief and loss following the death of his father when he wrote eulogies refiguring and incorporating Iranic myth, legend, and poetry (by poets such as Ferdowsi, Omar Khayyam, and Tahirih Qurratu'l-'Ayn) is a shared inheritance. From this follows a commitment to translation as political practice embedded in philosophical reading and social activism in the Iranian diaspora.

No Friend begins and ends with extensive paratexts written by Tofighian: the "Translator's Tale" (2018b) at the beginning, and the "Translator's Reflections" (2018c) at the end. This extensive peritextual packaging shapes and situates the narrative: constructing an audience, inviting a particular reading. As Gerard Genette (1997) reminds us, paratexts are essential "thresholds for interpretation" that indicate an anxiety of interpretation. Here that anxiety is Tofighian's insistence that interpretation of the novel resists the essentialism and tropes of the "refugee industry": the figures of the desperate supplicant, the tragic victim, the mystic sage. In "Manus Prison Theory" they work to map concepts, methods, and criteria required for appropriate translation and interpretation. Boochani's writing begins with messages in Farsi from Manus, the language of his oppressor, Tofighian reminds us, that is then then translated into English, the language of his jailers and torturers. The title page typographically signifies a relocation that interrupts the conventional identification of translator as a secondary figure in the wake of the author. Here it becomes a symbiotic relation, a shared vision where writing and translation are integrated and an ongoing work in process:

NO
FRIEND
Writing from Manus Prison
BUT THE
Translated by Omid Tofighian
MOUNTAINS
Behrouz Boochani

The "Translator's Tale" draws on the anecdotal tradition of the tale, introducing Galbraith and Mansoubi, among others, in a cast of translators, collaborators, and companions communicating in Farsi and English. This

translation process maps a twenty-first-century cartography that is networked digitally, and yet remains grounded in Kurdish and Iranian traditions; its storytelling, philosophy, memory, and performance are embedded in distinctive narrative techniques that remain common to traditional and contemporary storytelling practices of Iranian peoples, particularly poets and philosophers in exile. In the final "Translator's Reflections," Tofighian maps the analytical methodology underlying *No Friend*, suggesting ways to interpret the book derived from Boochani's own thinking, culture, and lived experience, influenced by his reading of Kurdish poets and writers: Abdullah Goran, Sherko Bekas, Choman Hardi, Abdulla Pashew, Kajal Ahmad, and painters Jamal Hamed Ameen and Ari Baban, among others. Tofighian's extensive paratexts locate translation as an essential component of the production and reception of Boochani's novel, to the creation of new knowledge from the prison from the perspective of the detained refugees, the authoritative interpreters of the logic of border politics.

Although the Manus prison is geographically remote from protest movements in the north, Boochani's resistance within the Manus prison is proximate to other contemporaneous protest movements where social media and assemblages of human and nonhuman agents promote collective decolonial activism. For example, research on the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings indicate translating, distributing, and curating information on social media was critical. The occupation of the camp on Manus in November 2017 that inspires Boochani's manifesto of decolonial resistance, "The Manus Letter," and a meme, the "Manus salute," draw on strategies that mobilize powerful affective appeals in the social activism of Black Lives Matter, for example, also a movement where bearing witness and recognition of "grievable life" is instrumental in campaigns to promote decolonizing strategies and intersectional analysis. Suvendrini Perera draws on recent research on Black Lives Matter, for example, to suggest that the mobilization of social media networks and digital technologies are critical to materializing a "space of appearance" from the Manus camp, "the space of their own bodies, brought into view despite the ways in which they are literally and symbolically rendered non-visible by the economies of the black site" (Perera 2018: 111).[9] Now Behrouz Boochani inspires strong responses and personalized connections online and in real time. His ubiquitous and transnational presence as a public intellectual through social media maps routes that connect

9 These are three streams of visibility identified by Mirzoeff, in his characterization of Black Lives Matter protests in America (2017: 17).

decolonial projects that are geographically remote yet ideologically kin, connected across a cartography of black sites, occupations, and protests, where witnessing scenes of systemic violence and embodied protests makes injustice visible. The sharing of images and texts on social media are essential to the creation of this spatial constellation.

Boochani's *No Friend but the Mountains* challenges Flanagan's "shelf" of world prison literature. This art and literature of resistance from Manus may be read along with the prison literature of Gramsci, Soyinka, and King, and Australian national traditions of carceral writing. However, it also draws deeply on long traditions of Kurdish and Iranian literature in exile. The "world" of this prison literature must be expanded beyond writing in English and Western literary traditions, to recognize the necessary and creative work of translation, and the diasporic activism of Iranian writing, translation, and philosophy. The "shelf" is superseded by digital technologies that transform the production and dissemination of resistance literature from carceral spaces such as the Manus prison, where texts and posts and emails shuttle across languages and platforms and screens, transforming understandings of autobiographical voice, agency, and identity. Scholarship in mass communications and social media has been quick to recognize the impact of new technologies on the visibility and audibility of refugees. Now scholarship in world literature can do likewise as concepts and practices of authorship and translation are being reconfigured at these borders where refugees become prisoners. As walls, checkpoints, and detention centers proliferate, Tan, Hamid, and Boochani mirror these times in surreal and dystopian forms, to reflect on what we have become in the presence of refugees incarcerated at the border.

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45

Guantánamo Diary as World(ly) Testimony

ROSANNE KENNEDY

> This is the secret world of Guantánamo.
>
> —*Larry Siems,* Guantánamo Diary*, 2015*

Described as "a text of immense historical importance," Mohamedou Ould Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary* offers a timely opportunity to consider the global significance and reach of literary testimony in the twenty-first century. At its simplest, testimony is a first-person account, usually of violence, trauma, or injustice, by someone who has lived through or witnessed events at close range. A captive in the war on terror, Slahi uses the genre of testimonial memoir to narrate his odyssey of extraordinary rendition and torture which began in 1999 with surveillance in Canada that prompted him to return to his home country of Mauritania. Immediately after 9/11 he was secretly arrested and, at the bidding of the CIA, rendered to black sites in Jordan and Afghanistan, finally arriving at Guantánamo in August 2002. In 2003, he began writing a diary in Arabic about his captivity. Two years later, determined that his story should reach readers outside of Guantánamo, he hand wrote his story in installments in English, which he was learning from his guards, interrogators, fellow inmates, and books. His manuscript, completed and handed to his lawyers in 2005, was classified as "secret" by the United States government until 2012. The first edition of *Guantánamo Diary*, edited by human rights advocate and writer Larry Siems, was published in January 2015.[1] An unexpected *New York Times* best-seller, it occasioned significant media commentary, reviews, celebrity readings, and a #freeSlahi campaign. Slahi was finally released in October 2016, never having been charged with any crime. A year later the "fully restored" edition, with an introduction by Slahi, was published. Translated into twenty-seven languages, *Guantánamo Diary* "circulates beyond its culture of origin," thereby fulfilling one of the criteria by which David Damrosch defines world literature (Damrosch 2003: 4). As a text which emerged

1 Siems, a human rights advocate, also authored *The Torture Report* (2012).

from the "secret world" of the war on terror, however, it complicates the notion of a singular or unified "culture of origin."

The multiple traditions that have been invoked in reviews of *Guantánamo Diary* constitute a genealogy, however partial, discontinuous, and fractured, of literary testimony. In a review for *The Guardian*, Pankaj Mishra promotes Slahi's memoir as "an extraordinary account [in which] . . . the global war on terror has found in a Mauritanian captive its true and complete witness" (Mishra 2015).[2] While the idiom of the "true witness" can be traced to Primo Levi's testimonies from Auschwitz, it also signals other literary traditions and genres, including *testimonio* and slave narrative (see Karb 2015). In an era in which human rights has become a "world system" (Stacy 2011), the minor genres of life narrative, including *testimonio*, memoir, and diary, have provided cultural vehicles for individuals to bear witness to human rights violations and address their claims to proximate and distant publics (Schaffer and Smith 2004). *Guantánamo Diary* is, I argue, an exemplary text for showing us how these older traditions of testimony are being refashioned in an era of human rights, global English, and the memoir boom, to create new variations adapted to the demands of the contemporary world.

Given this volume's focus on the history of world literature, it is vital to consider how *Guantánamo Diary* sits within traditions of testimony. To that end, I first introduce two influential traditions of literary witness – Holocaust testimony and Latin American *testimonio* – identifying their characteristics and considering the ways in which Slahi's memoir resonates with them. Second, taking a cue from Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's observation that to testify is a "unique performance," I argue that what distinguishes Slahi's testimonial performance is his distinctive voice (Felman and Laub 1992: 204). Siems describes the first fragments of Slahi's voice in the documentary record as "tantalizing" and, upon a fuller immersion in his manuscript, as "inflected with irony and wit" (Slahi 2017: 372, 375). While I agree, I trace the distinctiveness of Slahi's voice to his particular style, which, I show, is characterized by opposing tendencies. On the one hand, Slahi's narrative is transnationally haunted by a global canon circulating through it, with sounds of Kakfa, of Primo Levi, of slave narrative and Mauritanian folktales, and in this regard is expansive and worldly. On the other hand, his English is miniaturized and Americanized, and, like Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, is particularly suited to addressing his American audience. Slahi's constricted vocabulary of approximately 7,000 words

2 The cover of the restored British edition (Slahi 2017) carries this endorsement.

connotes, I suggest, ideas of containment, contraction, and the black box of terror – uncannily mirroring his situation of confinement.

Building on this analysis, I contend that *Guantánamo Diary* both demonstrates the potential of testimonial memoir from the war on terror to expand the field of world literature and, simultaneously, exposes the conditions that constrain its form and limit its reach. Around fifteen years ago, at the time that *Guantánamo Diary* was written, world literature critics advocated for the field to engage more closely with geopolitics and its global realignments of political forces in the aftermath of 9/11 (Trumpener 2006). An analysis of the ways in which *Guantánamo Diary* conveys the secret world of terror, which I offer below, responds to these calls and "potentially extend[s] . . . the cognitive map and itinerary of comparative literature" (Kadir 2006: 68). However, it is also imperative to acknowledge the material conditions, market forces, and cosmopolitan discourses that enable and constrain the form and circulation of a testimonial memoir such as *Guantánamo Diary*. As Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith observe, "At this historical moment, telling life stories in print or through the media by and large depends upon a Western-based publishing industry, media, and readership. This dependence affects the kinds of stories published and circulated, the forms those stories take, and the appeals they make to audiences" (2004: 11). Given these conditions, it is noteworthy that Slahi chose to write his memoir in English, thereby attracting the support of an American human rights advocate who undertook the demanding task of editing, ordering, referencing, and introducing the text, and the interest of American and British publishers who had the resources to market it strategically. Additionally, Slahi's colloquial American English makes his memoir immediately more accessible, relevant, and sympathetic to the readers he most explicitly addresses – Americans. As such, teaching *Guantánamo Diary* in the world literature classroom presents an opportunity to discuss the tensions that divide the field – for instance, between teaching texts in translation or global English – and the ironies that emerge in a text which both worlds and Americanizes the war on terror.

Testimonial Traditions: In the Constellation of World Literature

Although one might think that the critical paradigms developed to analyze Latin American *testimonio* and Holocaust testimony could be cross-fertilizing, these fields developed along separate trajectories. The archive on which

critics grounded insights into the crisis of bearing witness to the incomprehensible and shattering events of the Holocaust featured mainly European literature. Critical approaches for reading this literature of witness predominantly focused on the ethics and aesthetics of representation, issues which dominated comparative literature in the 1980s. By contrast, narrators of *testimonio*, and other testimonies of human rights violations, testified with the political aim of inciting intervention or action. While Latin Americanists drew on Derrida and psychoanalysis, approaches also shared by comparative literature critics, they favored paradigms from subaltern studies, postcolonialism, and Marxism. Consequently, critical paradigms that developed to study these emerging literary genres diverged in their approaches to the aesthetics, ethics, and politics of testimonial. Despite these differences, both of these field-defining paradigms – Holocaust testimony and Latin American *testimonio* – were articulated and elaborated in a transitional period when comparative literature, area studies, and postcolonial studies were still dominant disciplinary structures, and before the emergence of world literature as a rival paradigm. Today these testimonial traditions are intersecting in new ways via the institutions of international human rights, with its aspirational and redemptive discourse of universal human dignity (Peters 2005). While *Guantánamo Diary* shares many features with these earlier traditions of testimony, it is enfolded in a discourse of rights.

The Ethics of Testimony: Holocaust Witness

In the final decades of the twentieth century, the observation that we live in an "era of testimony" and an "era of the witness" became something of a mantra (Felman and Laub 1992; Wieriorka 2006). These claims came on the back of large-scale projects, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, to record the testimony of Holocaust survivors before that generation passed from living memory. Many survivors report that in the immediate aftermath of the war, people did not want to hear stories of their terrifying ordeals in the camps or in hiding. The Eichmann trial, held in Jerusalem in 1961, played a pivotal role in changing the status of survivor testimony. Backed by the resources of the state, it legitimized survivor testimony as a form of "truth-telling" about the past and conferred a new identity – survivor – on witnesses (Wieviorka 2006: 88). In contrast to this spectacular form of witness, Primo Levi published his memoir of Auschwitz, *If This Is a Man*, with a small Italian publishing house a few years after Auschwitz was liberated. It did not circulate widely until it was republished in 1958, when at least some people were ready to hear the

story he had to tell; since then it has been widely translated and has become an iconic work of Holocaust testimony.

While published nearly seventy years before *Guantánamo Diary*, *If This Is a Man* is an important monument in the tradition of witness literature. Levi, like Slahi, felt a compulsion to bear witness; as he explains: "the need to tell was so strong in us that I began to write the book there, in that German laboratory permeated by cold, war, and prying glances, although I knew that under no circumstances would I be able to keep those notes, scribbled any way I could" (Levi 2015: 167). This writing from inside the space of terror, dehumanization, and deprivation resonates with Slahi's act of writing his memoir while in an isolation hut in Camp Echo. Trained as a chemist, Levi was able to convey the dreadful particularity of the camp in lucid prose, while also providing an analysis of the Nazi camp system. One reviewer observes that, when Levi records the details of his first days in the camp, "the facts come at us one by one, just as he encountered them and from the same perspective – that of total, vulnerable naïveté. The tone at times reminds you of a children's book" (Deresiewicz 2015: 7). The tone of vulnerable naïveté is also present in Slahi's account of his arrival at a secret prison in Bagram, Afghanistan. Like Levi and his fellow travelers, who "might not even know where in Europe their Lager was situated, having arrived after a slaughterous and torturous journey in sealed boxcars" (Levi 2015: xx), Slahi can only guess at his location, having arrived hooded, earmuffed, and shackled, which he recounts in the opening chapter of *Guantánamo Diary*.

In his critical reflection on Levi's *If This Is a Man*, philosopher Giorgio Agamben contends that while historians have taught us much about the "historical, material, technical, bureaucratic, and legal circumstances" of the extermination of the Jews we still lack a clear understanding of the "ethical and political significance of the extermination, or even . . . a human understanding of what happened there" (Agamben 1999: 11). For such an understanding, he turns to Levi's testimony, which introduces the figure of the *muselmann* – prisoners who are "the living dead," destined for the gas chamber, "hav[ing] reached the bottom . . . no human condition more wretched exists . . . [n]othing belongs to us anymore . . . [t]hey will take away even our name" (Levi 2015: 23). The "contemporary relevance" of Levi's testimony becomes clear when reading *Guantánamo Diary*, which is haunted by the figure of the "living dead" (Agamben 1999: 11). Indeed, there is much to be learned through a comparative reading of the ways in which Levi's and Slahi's memoirs convey the daily lived experience of the "secret world" of their respective camps with rare precision, dignity, and compassion.

The Politics of Voice: *Testimonio* and the Subaltern

In locating testimony in a history of world literature, the genre of *testimonio*, which emerged in Latin America in the 1960s, deserves consideration. Critic John Beverley (2004) defined *testimonio* as a first-person, novel-length text told by a narrator who has witnessed or experienced atrocities and seeks to testify publicly. *Testimonio* usually focuses on "a 'life' or a significant life experience" (Beverley 2004: 31). Unlike autobiography, however, it aims "to recover the unspeakable experience of collective suffering that would otherwise go untold" and aims to raise the consciousness of listeners and readers (Sklowdowska 2001: 253). Often transcribed from an oral narrative, *testimonio* typically involves a collaboration between the person giving testimony and an editor. For instance, *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, perhaps the most famous *testimonio*, was produced through a collaboration between Menchu and anthropologist Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, who had lived in South America and was active in political solidarity movements (Menchu 1984). The *testimonio* originated as a week-long series of interviews in Burgos-Debray's Paris apartment, which she transcribed and edited. Menchu tells the story of her life and the lives of her people, Indigenous Mayans in Guatemala, of their persecution and suffering on the margins of the colonial state, and their genocide at the hands of the brutal Guatemalan military. Originally published in Spanish in 1983, and simultaneously translated into French, it was made into a documentary for French TV, and published in English in 1984. As this early publication history indicates, *I, Rigoberta Menchu* was a transnational production at its origins, and circulated beyond its culture of origin, thereby giving it a claim as world literature.

The literary status of *testimonio* was, however, tirelessly debated in the 1980s. Taking Menchu's text as exemplary of the genre, Beverley described *testimonio* as a type of literature which "is produced by subaltern peoples on the periphery . . . of the colonial situation" to challenge official history (2004: 47). Beverley argued that because *testimonio* "affirms the authority of oral culture against . . . literary and written literature as norms of expression," it could not be contained within the category of literature without putting the category itself into crisis (19). The Latin Americanists in the United States who championed *testimonio* were responding to Gayatri Spivak's famous provocation: "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (Spivak 1985). As Beverley recognizes, however, the subaltern is not a static category. After winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, Menchu "articulat[ed] herself as a political icon" and became active in circulating her *testimonio* and its claims; she was thus

"functioning as a subject of history" and "becoming non-subaltern" (2004: 81). Beverley observes that the trope that usually accompanies *testimonio* – "the voice of the voiceless" – signifies its emergence from outside the institutions of literature and a reading public but is "necessarily directed to them in what seems like a remedial or restitutive act" (19). This insight remains relevant for analyzing both the conditions of secrecy under which *Guantánamo Diary* was produced and the terms and directness of its address to the reading public.

Another issue that has generated extensive debate is the nature of the truth-claims advanced in *testimonio*. Drawing on the lexical history of "testimonio" in Spanish, Beverley argued early on that *testimonio* connotes "the act of testifying or bearing witness in a religious or legal sense" (2004: 32). Given its claims to historical truth, he proposed that *testimonio* should be treated as a documentary genre, rather than read as fiction. As is well known, anthropologist David Stoll ignited a controversy when he questioned the veracity of some of Menchu's claims, demonstrating that she was not present at all of the events she claimed to have witnessed (see Arias 2001). The intensive debate that took place in the 1980s on American campuses about *I, Rigoberta Menchu* suggests that "truth" was an expectation that readers, critics, and many academics brought to the genre. While literary critics developed reading strategies that identified multiple conceptions of "truth" in addition to legal or forensic truth, such as subjective truth and narrative truth, the issue of veracity nonetheless dogged the memoir and tainted both Menchu and her testimony (Gilmore 2017). Readers wanted to know: is the memoir true? Did the events really happen as described? The reader's expectation that a memoir will convey the "truth," as experienced by its narrator, has consequences for the unusual form of *Guantánamo Diary*, which combines first-person memoir with the professional apparatus of the footnote.

Guantánamo Diary: Worlding the War on Terror

Slahi narrates his memoir from the position of an Arab Muslim who is detained without charge as an "enemy combatant" of the United States. A citizen of Mauritania, an impoverished West African nation that slid into dictatorship after independence from France in 1960, he won a scholarship to Germany, where he lived for twelve years, before moving to Montreal. He trained briefly in Afghanistan in 1990 and 1991 during the Afghan war against the Russians. While he brings his knowledge of world geography and his experience of diverse cultures and languages to Guantánamo, his transcultural travels target him as a terror suspect. For instance, he represents

a conversation with an interrogator, Tom, who declares: "You're very smart! To me, you meet all the criteria of a top terrorist . . . You're Arab, you're young, you went to Jihad, you speak foreign languages, you've been in many countries, you're a graduate in a technical discipline" (Slahi 2017: 192). When Slahi asks: "And what crime is that," Tom responds: "Look at the hijackers: they were the same way" (192). Slahi undermines the war on terror by crafting scenes such as the above that expose the simplistic logic and parochialism of interrogators such as Tom, a metonym for American intelligence, who resorts to a loose principle of sameness rather than forensic evidence to identify "terror suspects." In another scene, Slahi recalls his offense when an FBI agent mistakenly identifies him as being a Yemini from Sana'a, a city on the Arabian peninsula, which is a continent away and culturally distinct from his home in Nouakchott, Mauritania (xlviii). These examples illustrate Slahi's technique of revealing the limited geopolitical knowledge of his American interrogators – whom he (and presumably his readers) would expect to be experts on the countries from which terror suspects come. It is this cultural cauldron – the mix of the cultures of the American military and interrogators, of detainees, and of local workers from Guantánamo – from which *Guantánamo Diary* originates.

Introducing a narrative voice that is at once worldly and naïve, Slahi's memoir opens with his account of extraordinary rendition from Jordan, where he was detained for seven months, to a secret prison at Bagram Airforce Base in Afghanistan. He narrates rendition in a familiar idiomatic English, which positions him as someone "like us" rather than a terrorist.[3] Wondering where he has been taken, he comforts himself: "optimistic thoughts suggest maybe you're in the hands of Americans, but don't worry, they just want to take you home" (Slahi 2017: 4). When he arrives it is warm, and he speculates: "Yes, Germany it is: it was July and the sun rises early. But why Germany? I had done no crimes in Germany! . . . And yet the German legal system was by far a better choice for me; I know the procedures and speak the language" (6–7). When he hears the locals speaking, he thinks, "maybe Filipino . . . I'm aware of the huge US military presence there. Oh, yes, Philippines it is: they conspired with the US and pulled some shit on me" (7). Bodily needs take over: "By now, though, I just wanted to arrive and take a pee, and after that they can do whatever they please. Please let me arrive! I thought; After that you may kill me!" (7). Along with describing himself as a "small cat in a big bag" (4), the colloquialism "take a pee" signifies Slahi as unthreatening, mirroring his small physique. By rendering his rendition

3 For a discussion of how narrators from Iran and Iraq position themselves as "like us," see Whitlock 2007.

in the mode of black comedy, characterized by a cadence that swings dramatically from optimism to terror, from needing to pee to being killed, Slahi conveys his ordinariness (he has bodily needs), his literary sensibility, and his worldly knowledge, which work together to disarm assumptions about an angry and terrifying "other" that the reader might bring to the text.

Damrosch argues that in the new global literary market "the writers who prove to be of real importance are those who negotiate most creatively the tensions as well as the possibilities of their cultural situation" (2009: 107). Slahi creatively conveys his situation as a terror suspect in one of the world's most notorious prisons by invoking other infamous scenes of catastrophe and terror to represent the secret world of Guantánamo. For instance, he refers to the Nazi slogan "Arbeit macht frei," thereby positioning his memoir in a tradition of testimony from Auschwitz (Slahi 2017; Levi 2015). Throughout the text, and particularly in scenes describing renditions and torture, Slahi recalls seeing "the ghosts of my fellow detainees," whom he refers to as the "living dead," a link to the *muselmann* of Auschwitz that Primo Levi memorialized (Slahi 2017: 17). During renditions, the detainees are referred to as "packages" and "cargo" (135, xxii), a language of dehumanization also familiar from Holocaust testimony, in which survivors recall Nazis referring to Jews as "pieces" and "vermin." Slahi later compares himself to a slave and recalls the history of slavery in the USA. Additionally, he draws on oral traditions from his own culture to represent his situation of detention and dehumanization. He recalls a Mauritanian folktale in which a rooster mistakes a man for corn and wants to eat him; as Slahi explains, his survival depends on convincing the United States government that he is "not corn" (73).

Guantánamo Diary shares the first-person narrative and testimonial urgency of *testimonio* and, like *testimonio*, originates from outside the public sphere. Unlike *testimonio*, however, Slahi's memoir does not take the form of a transcribed oral account, and nor it is merely a documentary recounting of events. Rather, it is a writerly text that shows familiarity with literary styles, traditions, and voices. Weaving a pastiche of literary styles, colloquialisms, oral folktales, and cultural references to convey his subjective experience of the war on terror, Slahi's memoir exemplifies the ways in which testimony is a "unique performance" (Felman and Laub 1992: 204). For example, he crafts a memorable scene with his interrogation team which echoes Kafka's sense of the bureaucratic absurd:

> "Bring me to the court, and I'll answer all your questions"...
> "There will be no court!" they would answer.

> "Are you a Mafia? You kidnap people, lock them up, and blackmail them," I said.
> "You guys are a law enforcement problem," said Tom. "We cannot apply the conventional law to you. We need only circumstantial evidence to fry you."
> "I've done nothing against your country, have I?"
> "You're a part of the big conspiracy against the U.S.!" Tom said.
> "You can pull this charge on anybody! What have I done?"
> "I don't know, you tell me!" (Slahi 2017: 64–65)

As this example demonstrates, the literary value of the memoir, which raises it from a simple account of injustice or a succession of human rights violations, stems in part from the way Slahi channels a canon of world literature and popular culture – including Kafka, *Star Trek,* Hollywood films, and even chess – to communicate the sheer confusion and absurdity at the heart of the war on terror, and his sense of bewilderment at the way that this war is being conducted.

While Slahi's text is a medley of literary styles and allusions, he rhetorically insists on the documentary simplicity of his account. Metaphorically taking the witness stand, he pledges simply "to tell what I saw with my own eyes" (Slahi 2017: 19). While the trope of the eyewitness is conventional in testimonial narrative, what merits attention is Slahi's appeal to linguistic transparency to seal his testimonial oath. Indeed, he ties his reliability as a narrator to the transparency of language:

> I had in my head everything I wanted to write: just the truth as I remembered it, without embellishing. I came to understand that you can convey everything in your head in any language, as long as you have the will and people around you who speak the language. (Slahi 2017: xxxviii)

Here Slahi minimizes the matter of language, while in fact, his use of English is precisely what makes him more familiar, more relatable, and altogether less threatening to the American readers he addresses than if he wrote, for instance, in Arabic. He willingly learns English, the language of his guards and interrogators, so that he can communicate with them. Most of them do not learn Arabic. By adapting and assimilating, he naturalizes and mythologizes – in the sense coined by Roland Barthes – English as the global language. He also reassures the anglophone reader, by presenting the world of Guantánamo in the familiar form of a memoir, ready for us to consume. So a paradox: *Guantánamo Diary* simultaneously "worlds" the war on terror by drawing on the styles and voices of world literature to convey its horrors,

while also confirming the cultural hegemony of a miniaturized and colloquial American English.

Testimony's Address

Like both Rigoberta Menchu and Primo Levi, Slahi is compelled to bear witness, to tell his story to the public. Participating in a Combatant Status Review Tribunal (CSRT) in 2004 gives him confidence: "I gained credibility among the guards as an innocent man. I was recovering my voice. I began to think again about my story reaching someone outside of Guantánamo" (Slahi 2017: xxxvi). With this claim he implicitly locates himself in a tradition of human rights rooted in the Enlightenment, which values "the voice of the victim" as "offer[ing] a kind of truth that documentary evidence, reports, legal determinations cannot provide" (Peters 2005: 276).[4] His claim to recovering his voice is particularly noteworthy given that "torture attempts to destroy a voice, to force a human being to attest to the power of the state" (Slaughter 1997: 425–26). Slahi does not simply reclaim his voice; he uses it to make human rights claims: "What I had been trying to write about my captivity," he explains, "was not meant for the intelligence community, but rather as a kind of self-advocacy addressed to readers outside of Guantánamo" (2017: xxxiv). This self-advocacy distinguishes him from the subaltern of *testimonio*; he draws on the discourse of human rights, the Geneva Conventions, and expectations about testimony to position himself as an authoritative witness who has the skills to interpret the meaning of his experience and the broader meaning of Guantánamo.

One feature which distinguishes Slahi's memoir from Holocaust testimony is its direct address to the reader. Edward Said observed, now decades ago, that as "a being in the world," the text "addresses anyone who reads" (1983: 33).[5] By using phrases such as "Dear Reader" and addressing American readers in their own language, about breaches of law and human rights perpetrated by the American government, Slahi positioned his memoir as having immediate ethical and political relevance.[6] "Writing," Slahi tells us, "became my way of fighting the U.S. government's narrative. I considered humanity my jury; I wanted to bring my case directly to the people and take my chances. I . . . believed in books, and in the people who read them"

4 See also Ganguly 2016 for a discussion of literature, sentiment and rights in the Enlightenment.

5 See also Beverley's discussion of the address of *testimonio* (2004: 2).

6 Here we see a parallel with Levi (2015: xx), who refers to witness testimony as "a weapon." Also see Whitlock 2007, on memoir as a "soft weapon."

(2017: xxxix).[7] His belief in the reader confers a responsibility on the reader to meet his expectations for a fair hearing.[8] Indeed, he challenges Americans to pressure their government to live up to its democratic ideals by "compel-[ing] the US government to open a torture and war crimes investigation" (364). Responding to his call for justice, human rights advocates and activists took up his case, instigating a petition which garnered over 50,000 signatures and a #freeSlahi campaign.

It is worth reflecting briefly on the significance of memoir as a vehicle for moving Slahi's testimony from the secret world of GTMO to the public sphere (Kennedy 2014). While the title of *Guantánamo Diary* positions it in the genre of a diary, in form it more closely resembles a memoir, in which a narrator recalls a significant life event – in Slahi's case, rendition, torture, detention. *Guantánamo Diary* conforms to the conventions of memoir as a genre – namely, that it should be intelligible and accessible to its readers, that it should convey subjective and objective truth – that is, the narrative should represent events that actually occurred and place them in their proper temporal sequence. The popularity of memoir in America, evidenced through a decades-long memoir boom, eases the travel of Slahi's memoir from the underworld of Guantánamo to the public sphere. Additionally, the genre of memoir, increasingly used as a cultural vehicle for making human rights claims, helps to move his testimony from the quasi-jurisdiction of GTMO, with its secret military hearings, to the jurisdiction of the public sphere, where he hopes for a fair hearing. Despite its packaging as memoir, Slahi's is not the only voice in *Guantánamo Diary*; through invented dialogue his memoir carries the voices of guards, interrogators, and other detainees. In addition, the paratexts convey multiple other voices. In this regard the memoir can be classified as what Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1992) calls a heteroglossic text.

One of the distinctive features of *Guantánamo Diary*, which contributes to its heteroglossia, is the inclusion of paratextual footnotes. Siems extensively footnoted Slahi's account, referencing his memories of people and events, and his claims of torture and abuse, to the prolific documentary record. A comparison of Slahi's voice with the voice of the footnotes illustrates the

7 Likewise, Beverley contends that "the position of the reader of testimonio is akin to that of a jury member in a courtroom" (2004: 32).

8 In trusting his story to the public, Slahi positions readers not only as his jury but as witnesses who, especially if they are American, bear some responsibility through the "testimonial contract" (Sklodowska 2001) to right the wrongs he has suffered or at least to know what the US government is doing in Guantánamo.

text's heteroglossia. For example, describing his arrival at GTMO, Slahi reports that he was led to his cell in Oscar Block, which was "designed for isolation." He recalls:

> I was the only detainee who had been picked for interrogation from our entire group of thirty-four . . . When the guard dropped me in the frozen-cold box I almost panicked behind the heavy metal door. I tried to convince myself, It's only a temporary place . . . This place cannot be for more than the rest of the night! In fact, I spent one whole month in Oscar Block.
>
> (Slahi 2017: 38)

This paragraph illustrates characteristic features of Slahi's voice and the familiar highs and lows of his narrative style: his description of his initial stress ("I almost panicked"), followed by his irrepressible optimism ("I tried to convince myself"), and ending with his cruel disappointment ("I spent one whole month"). An asterisk signifies a footnote confirming his account:

> *The March 3, 2003, Camp Delta Standard Operating Procedures instructed that arriving prisoners be processed and held for four weeks in a maximum security isolation block "to enhance and exploit the disorientation and disorganization felt by a newly arrived detainee in the interrogation process" and "to [foster] dependence of the detainee on his interrogator."
>
> (Slahi 2017: 38)

This footnote introduces two additional voices: the voice of the human rights advocate, who strives to be factual, professional, and non-emotive, and the bureaucratic and dehumanizing voice of the US documents on the treatment of detainees, quoted in the United States Senate's *Warren Report on Torture*.

What work do the footnotes do? How would we read and judge the memoir if there were no footnotes? The footnote is associated with a professional or academic approach. In human rights reports, for instance, the voice of the witness is backed by the "professional" apparatus of footnotes, which supports the truth of the testimony and provides a basis for making human rights claims (Dudai 2006). Researched and written by human rights advocate Larry Siems, the footnotes link Slahi's memoir to a vast archival record and serve both to validate Slahi's account and prepare the ground for future human rights claims against the American government. We can understand the imperative Siems (and perhaps the publishers) felt to tie Slahi's account to the documentary record by recalling the "tainting" of Menchu's *testimonio* by allegations of lying and exaggeration (Gilmore 2017). By including footnotes, Siems preempts the sabotaging of Slahi's account on the grounds of its veracity and prevents Slahi from being vilified as Menchu

was in the aftermath of Stoll's allegations. The inclusion of footnotes also signals that Slahi's American English is not enough for him to penetrate the American public sphere on his own. Here again we can learn from Rigoberta Menchu, whose *testimonio* was mediated and validated by an anthropologist. Likewise, Slahi's text is legitimated by Siems, who in turn is backed by the American Civil Liberties Union and by PEN.

Guantánamo Diary as World(ly) Literature

Guantánamo Diary meets a number of criteria by which world literature has been defined. It has been widely translated, and it addresses a topic of global scope and interest – the war on terror. It also complicates the notion of a discrete "culture of origin" in a global era. As I have shown, *Guantánamo Diary* is exemplary in revealing the contradictory conditions underpinning testimony as a global genre today. On the one hand, it worlds the war on terror in a number of ways: by showing us that world from the perspective of a captive; by providing a glimpse of its geographical reach and its geopolitical networks, and by introducing its "standard operating procedures" and their effects on the subjects positioned by the discourse of terror, both facilitators and detainees. From a literary perspective, it worlds the war on terror by implicitly channeling the styles and genres of world literature, oral tradition, and popular culture. On the other hand, *Guantánamo Diary* also brings that world "back home" to Americans by representing it through a familiar idiomatic English. One of the challenges presented by Slahi's adoption of Americanized English is whether to read the text in the expanded transnational paradigm of American literature articulated by Wae Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell (2007), or to position it in a paradigm of world literature, in which its American English exemplifies the risk of naturalizing English as a global language. With a voice which, as I have shown, is both worldly and Americanized, *Guantánamo Diary* can be read creatively through both paradigms.

Additionally, *Guantánamo Diary* demonstrates the potential of testimonial memoir as a global genre to introduce new voices and geopolitical contexts into world literature. Recognition of the material, linguistic, and rhetorical conditions that have facilitated the publication and reception of *Guantánamo Diary*, and that have catapulted it to the *New York Times* bestseller list – particularly Slahi's use of English – should, however, prompt questions about the limits that shape the form and reception of testimonial memoir today. These conditions reward authors who effectively "translate" their experience into English, thereby making the text accessible

through global English, from which it is translated into other languages, including Arabic. As we have seen, Slahi's crucial decision to learn and to write in English positions him as an active cultural agent in shaping his story, and enables him, with political and aesthetic savviness, to exploit linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical resources to target and reach his intended readers. He implicitly recognized that a memoir, and particularly one about an issue of such relevance to Americans as the war on terror, has a better chance of traveling globally – of becoming world literature – if it is published first in English. This choice also helped to make his memoir attractive to British and American publishing houses, which in turn led to numerous reviews in high-quality journalism, celebrity readings, and human rights events, all of which further increased its cultural capital. While this concentration of economic and cultural resources in the USA and the UK propelled the text to success and positioned it as an unexpected "smash hit" (Moreno 2015), it should compel us to question the conditions that enable a text such as *Guantánamo Diary* to circulate as "world" literature. What if Slahi had published his memoir in Arabic rather than English? Would it then vie for a place in the canon of global writing and world literature?

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46

The Nonhuman, the Posthuman, and the Universal

MADS ROSENDAHL THOMSEN

The nonhuman has a long literary history. Plants, animals, spirits, gods, and, more recently, machines have been agential in creating both enchanted and dystopian visions of the world. Mythologies from around the world are full of animals, both imagined and real, to which a wide range of qualities have been ascribed.[1] One of the oldest works of literature, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, would be unthinkable without the presence of gods, half-gods, and demons, just as *Aesop's Fables* would be nothing without its animal protagonists. Even the tiniest creatures can be the subject of an entire text, such as in Robert Musil's short story "Flypaper," which humanizes captured flies:

> Here they stand all stiffly erect, like cripples pretending to be normal, or like decrepit old soldiers (and a little bowlegged, the way you stand on a sharp edge). They hold themselves upright, gathering strength and pondering their position. After a few seconds they've come to a tactical decision and they begin to do what they can, to buzz and try to lift themselves. They continue this frantic effort until exhaustion makes them stop. Then they take a breather and try again. But the intervals grow even longer. They stand there and I feel how helpless they are. (Musil 2011)

The nonhuman has also been important in representing universally recognizable characters central to the influence of certain genres and works of world literature, such as fairy tales and magical realism. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the nonhuman in literature, not least in world literature, where there is a central tension between strangeness and familiarity, and where the nonhuman engages with a part of the world that is independent of language and, to some degree, of culture. Animals and other nonhuman beings are of course not completely culturally neutral, but they do have a certain distance from the human realm, which at times allows them

1 See Ortiz Robles and Turner for comprehensive introductions to animals in literature.

to function as interlocutors that keep their views of the world strange to everybody.

Yet now the nonhuman, whose influence continues to be important, has been supplemented by the figure of the posthuman. Although the idea of a succession to humanity is a logical consequence of Darwinism, it has become a more pressing issue with the development of new technologies that have accelerated in the twenty-first century.[2] These technologies could potentially allow humanity to steer evolution (including its own) toward something that would no longer be considered human as we know it today. Instead of apocalyptic visions of the end of the world, which have been imaginatively compelling for many, among them religious fundamentalists, the idea of the posthuman conjures up a new era after the human, for better or worse. Science fiction already contains a wide range of posthuman figures, and mainstream authors are increasingly exploring radically changed living conditions and posthuman worlds. Literary responses to these very concrete scenarios of change have been manifold, as writers have reanimated the once-dated question of universalism, newly interrogating "essential" human traits in the era of the Anthropocene. This development has also given new relevance to past visions of the posthuman.[3] At a time in history when the unity of humanity is firmly established by science and policies, it is somewhat ironic to be facing the risk of new divisions among humans caused by humanity itself.

The rising influence of a number of theoretical positions that we might label "posthumanist" or "postanthropocentric" at the beginning of the twenty-first century must be seen against the backdrop of a morally troubled humanity.[4] Human influence has become so strong that it affects all aspects of the globe, and the rapid annihilation of other species, which has been termed the Sixth Extinction, appears utterly unsustainable (Kolbert 2014). This has created a situation where the entanglement of problems that humans are facing and the politics needed to solve them can only be thought of in terms that are global, not national or regional.

Human exceptionalism is thus challenged from two sides: on the one, by a rethinking of who or what deserves dignity, which in a Western line of

2 Darwin did not speculate on the continued effects of evolution on humanity, and the pace of evolution by natural selection is too slow to really matter to humans. However, with technology, new horizons have opened where the speed of change may be uncomfortably fast. See also Thomsen 2013.

3 Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has only become more relevant in the past years. See also Campana and Maisano's edited volume *Renaissance Posthumanism* (2016).

4 For an excellent introduction to posthumanism, see Wolfe 2009.

thinking for so long had been concentrated on humans (and, often, not even all humans until not so long ago). While the human species does have certain qualities – intelligence, technology, complex languages, and so on – it is rightfully questioned whether these qualities make humans morally superior and deserving of more dignity than nonhumans. On the other, technological advancement has rendered humans inferior to machines in many arenas in which humans used to dominate – technology can even now be used to "upgrade" humans – and thus technology is both a subject of fiction and an ever-present element of the world today.

The importance of the nonhuman and the posthuman to world literature cannot be separated from the way in which each figure raises the question of what is universal and what is not. Both the nonhuman and the posthuman have been influential as subjects in world literature and as elements in texts that facilitate understanding across cultures. In this chapter, I will delve deeper into the role of the nonhuman and the posthuman and then go on to argue that these forces place a pressure on humanity's self-image, while also providing an opportunity to make universal thinking tangible and respectable.

The Nonhuman and the Ethics of Representation

The nonhuman in world literature should be seen in relation to the fact that the creation and reading of literature is probably one of the most exclusively human activities, especially when compared to other forms of artistic expression. Some animals can perform, birds can sing, and, when trained for the task, elephants and apes can paint; however, using language to create poetry or fiction is one activity that distinctly characterizes humans in contrast to other biological life. Nevertheless, fauna and flora play a significant part in world literature, often even as characters with agency. If the story of the Tower of Babel signifies the differences in language among people, engagement with creatures that are mostly indifferent to any human language introduces the voice of beings that do not belong to a specific culture but, first and foremost, to nature.

Nonhumans have played a major role in literature, not least in relation to certain genres that have had a broad influence on world literature that is read outside of its culture of origin. Fables often rely on nonhuman actors that have acquired human traits but are not human. Fairy tales, both collected folk stories such as the tales by the Brothers Grimm and original pieces such as those by Hans Christian Andersen, are populated by nonhuman actors that

enchant the world and bring a moral perspective to the world of humans as seen through the eyes of an animal. "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Little Mermaid" are just two very different examples of nonhuman figures whose allegorical potential and transferable qualities have been instrumental in Andersen's global influence (there are translations into more than two hundred languages). The further popularization of fairy tales through film and television, e.g., by Disney, has had an immense influence on children's imaginations for generations. Animal autobiographies were also a popular Victorian genre, often revolving around the fear of losing one's beauty, but this narrative device is less frequently used now, although contemporary examples, such as Angolan writer José Eduardo Agualusa's *The Book of Chameleons*, do exist (Flegel 2017: 153).

One of the most important genres in the twentieth century, in terms of putting literatures on the global map, is magical realism, which deeply involves the nonhuman. Not only South American writers like Gabriel García Márquez but also Asian writers such as Haruki Murakami from Japan, Mo Yan from China, and Salman Rushdie from India have each in their own way brought the nonhuman into their fictional universe. It is quite likely that this element has been one factor in their widespread influence. Mo Yan's 2006 novel *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* is organized around the reincarnation of the protagonist into a number of different animals – a donkey, an ox, a pig, a dog, and a monkey – before being born as a human again. Mo Yan frequently works at the borders between humans and animals, sometimes suggesting that a character could be a chimera or at other times conjuring up the image of a human being transformed into a bird.[5] This is set against the backdrop of modern Chinese history, in which the vilification of citizens was often, as in his novels, accompanied by dehumanization and calling people animals.

The blurring of the borders between humans and animals produces an effect of uncanniness, which is perhaps most strongly expressed in Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," in which dehumanization literally occurs when a man is transformed into a bug. This new embodiment is both familiar and unfamiliar. A reverse transformation happens in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, when the pigs at the end of the novel can no longer be distinguished from humans. From the existential and abstract character of Kafka's story to the political commentary of Orwell's, the chimera is a powerful figure in literature. The presence of animals in world literature is thus one of both estrangement and connection. Despite the personification of animals, they do

5 All these examples can be found in Mo Yan 2001.

not belong to a certain culture but are positioned outside the realm of human deeds. As Kári Driscoll and Eva Hoffman write, animals "have always served as both a mirror and a screen for the human, a site of negativity against which 'the human' has been defined" (2017: 5). However, animals are not neutral, as they have different meanings in different cultures. A Western reader may be familiar with some of the characteristics of different animals in Chinese culture, but obviously not in the same way a native person will be. How a culture relates to a certain animal also changes over time, not least with urbanization influencing all parts of the world, where more and more people have little contact with animals in their everyday lives. The way that the nonhuman has been interpreted symbolically has also changed, although the extent of the change can be questioned, as Brenda Schildgen has noted:

> The same animal with the same traits – the lion or eagle, for example – may take on completely different meanings in different contexts. But what is most important in all cases is that the creature as image conveys meaning. It is rarely mere ornamentation. In this respect, contemporary discussions of nonhuman creatures – by Derrida and Agamben, for example – continue the medieval assumption that nonhuman creatures both as beings and as images reveal something, thus sharing the idea that animals both as "beings" and as "signs" might convey both cognitive and affective knowledge. (2010: 24)

Different human perspectives on animals can also at times defy cliché. Ursula K. Heise notes in *Imagining Extinction* that the polar bear has become a symbol of the Arctic region and of endangered species, whereas the change in habitats for the Inuit has caused them to interact with the polar bear in a less romantic way than imagined by the Western part of the world (Heise 2016: 242). The ecological challenges of the twenty-first century make it even more pertinent and relevant to include the awareness of nonhuman life in literary discourse. Heise has shown that there are numerous ways in which literature can represent nonhuman life, and in which animal rights are given a concrete expression in narratives of exploitation and extinction. The global nature of this challenge also provides an argument for a world literary perspective on environmental problems that cannot be solved locally and instead require a global effort – e.g., global warming and overfishing, to name just two human-caused crises with severe and tangible consequences across borders and across species. With the realization that we live in the era of the Anthropocene – a time when human activity has the largest impact on Earth's geology, fauna, and flora – literature that is able to address these challenges and to describe a world where animals are also actors in a larger network of actions gains new significance.

The inclusion of the nonhuman in literature has been particularly impactful in highlighting human crimes. The perspective of the animal often comes to serve as a reminder of the inhumanity of humans, shifting the question of who has the higher moral status in favor of animals, as it is the case in, for example, the writings of Mo Yan, among many others. A different take on this is Indra Sinha's 2007 novel *Animal's People*, which addresses the Bhopal disaster in 1984 that killed thousands and left more than 100,000 chronically ill due to toxic gasses. Sinha's influential novel has become – in a phrase coined by Ann Rigney – a "virtual monument" of the disaster.[6] The novel is narrated by a boy known as "Animal," who was born with a twisted spine as a result of the Bhopal disaster. He is forced to move on all fours, and he does not see himself as part of humanity but as an animal. Sinha does not pretend that his character is based on an existing person and makes sure to change the name of the city, yet the novel unmistakeably recalls Bhopal. The fact that "Animal" tells the story but moves on all fours makes him a complicated character stuck between the human and nonhuman. It invites readers to reflect on their own moral judgments – for example, whether they actually regard Animal more as an animal than a human. Animal's complicated moral status, however, points back to the behavior of the parties responsible for the catastrophe and, not least, to the reluctance of the owners of the chemical plant, Dow Chemical, to take responsibility for the disaster and provide relief.

It has been widely debated whether one should write allegorically or counterfactually about traumatic events.[7] The horrors of the Holocaust should speak for themselves, and testimonies should ideally be enough. Yet several other representational strategies have shown to be valuable for memory. One example is the graphic novel *Maus I+II* by Art Spiegelman, which uses animals to depict Germans, Jews, the French, and so on. The symbolism of German cats and Jewish mice is not subtle, but the ability to give a more general perspective on his father's very specific story of suffering cannot be separated from the allegorical representation of humans as animals. By repurposing the propaganda tactics of the Nazi regime, Spiegelman shows how cultural conditions play a large role in dehumanizing people, whether they turn into predators or victims. The confusion of being trapped in a world where new rules apply is one of the strongest effects of Spiegelman's story, and the distance from the actual events that is created

6 See Rigney 2005 on virtual sites of memory.
7 See Schwarz 1999 and Rosenfeld 2011: 219.

by the use of animal characters transforms a unique testimony into a more general story of dehumanization.

Aleksandar Hemon's novel *Nowhere Man* deals with the war in Bosnia in the 1990s as the author's alter ego, Josef Pronek, arrives in Chicago. The book is another example of how animals can be central in portraying atrocities committed by humans. Right from the beginning of the novel, the narrator speaks of an animal inside of him that is struggling to get out. He makes his living in Chicago in part by working as a canvasser for Greenpeace and encounters many attitudes toward animals, and when he presents a Bosnian song to his American girlfriend and her friends about a dog that wants to be a wolf, they interpret it as a universal fable. In two of the most central scenes of the novel, human–animal relations are at the forefront. One short chapter reads as a letter from Josef's friend Mirza chronicling the siege of Sarajevo. In the midst of human suffering, with people being carried down the hills on stretchers, many of them dying, Mirza describes what to him is the saddest sight: a horse that committed suicide by throwing itself off a cliff, as if it was unable to exist in a world with such human atrocities (Hemon 2002: 134). Later on, Josef's girlfriend wants him to drown a mouse that they have caught in their apartment, which he half-heartedly tries to do, but he suffers a breakdown as he cannot kill the struggling rodent. As in the case of Sinha and Spiegelman, the human–animal relation in Hemon's novel heightens the awareness of the inhuman behavior of humans, placing atrocities in a wider and more unnerving perspective. There is a certain paradox in this humanization through the inclusion of animals in a context where the dehumanization of humans is at stake, but this paradox unravels itself through the effects of the presence of animals that take no part in the folly and questionable morality of humans. A striking example of this is Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five*, about the bombing of Dresden in 1945, where a bird gets the last word: "Poo-tee-weet?" (Vonnegut 1969: 215).[8] Enough said.

The Posthuman Horizon

The posthuman poses a different challenge to humanity than the nonhuman, and it also strikes at the core of widely held beliefs. The large monotheistic religions and the tradition of humanism both rely on the assumption that humans are privileged, entitled, and the most advanced species that will ever

8 Vonnegut's novel also features aliens that abduct humans and keep them in a zoo and thus also includes estrangement from the human perspective for a technically more advanced perspective.

walk the Earth. But with the prospect of the posthuman, the world will not come to an end due to an apocalypse, but it will seem like an end because something will follow humanity. Furthermore, the unity of humanity, which is taken for granted even though our species once lived side by side with several other hominoids, could be challenged by humans who have been enhanced in certain ways. The paradox one has to struggle with is that the unity of humanity is not a certainty in the future, although now universal human rights are politically accepted worldwide, often, unfortunately, only in principle. In some respects, it is easier and less eerie to imagine the end of human life than to imagine a radically different way of being that would be similar to humanity but also distinct from it and which might make humans the objects of the kind of condescending thoughts that we impose on our distant ancestors. Even though the current relevance of the posthuman comes from a series of technologies that could change life radically, the posthuman could also be seen as a logical consequence of evolution, at least as a horizon that one would have to consider.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* published first in 1818 remains a fixture in fiction on the posthuman. The creation that happens to be much larger than an ordinary human being, and much more agile, is also intelligent and sensible, and yet it reacts violently against humanity. The conversations between Dr. Frankenstein and his unnamed creature reveal an articulate but disillusioned being who cannot imagine a future among humans; he asks Frankenstein to create a companion for him with whom he can live far away from human contact. As most readers know, the novel does not end well, and the creation (probably) drowns in the icy waters of the Arctic as things return to their "natural" order. But what if Shelley had let the creature live? What would a world with a completely new species of hominoids look like? Shelley did not venture into that territory, and maybe her novel is so much stronger because it is left to the imagination of the reader.

Since Shelley, technology has developed beyond what most people could imagine and this has made the question of the posthuman even more relevant. There are many ways to describe the thresholds of a posthuman condition and some have already been crossed. From the therapy-oriented use of pacemakers and Cochrane implants to overcome heart problems and hearing disabilities, respectively (although few would say that such bodily enhancement qualifies one as posthuman), to the integration of chips and sensory enhancing devices, the cyborg is not just something that belongs to the future. Genetical modification of humans is perhaps the most controversial issue, and again, there have already been steps taken toward this with the

birth of so-called three-parent babies, where the fertilised egg has had minor parts of its DNA replaced with genetic material from a third person (see Reardon 2017). There are also many hopes for what could be accomplished with the transition to a posthuman condition. Longer or even eternal lives (often at the top of the list), higher intelligence, enhanced senses, or the ability to recreate oneself, perhaps as a simulation in cyberspace, have already been the subject of fictions. Most of these prospects will probably not be relevant in the years, decades, or even centuries to come, but current technological development is in many ways fulfilling the futuristic visions expressed by science fiction decades ago.

The imagined pace of development has undergone a significant change. H. G. Wells's 1895 story "The Time Machine" imagines a divided humanity that has evolved in different directions over the course of 800,000 years due to different living conditions. Wells does not imply any use of technology, but literature has ample examples of uses of technology that would speed up or change the direction of evolution by natural selection. Olof Stapledon, on the other hand, imagines in his 1930 novel *Last and First Men* that humanity worked for millions of years in a deliberate attempt to create a new version of the human with highly engineered enhancements, such as very long life spans or the ability to communicate telepathically. These *longue durée* frames have now been replaced by much shorter ones. Michel Houellebecq's 1998 novel *The Elementary Particles* speculates on the effects of a genetic manipulation carried out by UNESCO that would create a more moral and benign human species, with the first member of the new species born in 2029.

The posthuman has thus become a recurrent theme in contemporary fiction with a significant influence on films and comics. The resurgence of superheroes across various media is a striking example of the fascination with enhanced human beings, whereas the uncanny elements of a different mode of existence has been explored by the TV series *Black Mirror*, for example. Japanese Manga has also proven to be a global fascination, not least thanks to its fantasies of posthuman beings, and which early on in the postwar period took up what are now considered classical themes of posthuman discourse: mutations, monsters, and the blurring of the borders between human and animal and between human and machine. Katsuhiro Otomo's *Domu* from 1980–83 is a classic example of the combination of a highly recognizable modern world that is full of characters with special abilities – for example, the ability to teleport.

The posthuman is often seen as a threat, as it would give a completely new meaning to humanity and in many ways devalue what is often considered

most valuable, if the posthuman would have superior qualities. But the posthuman can also be viewed as a liberating figure, not just in terms of providing humans with more abilities, but also in terms of setting a new direction on the backdrop of a traumatic past. Afrofuturism is one example of a loosely coupled movement that connects African identity and cultural expressions with science fiction-inspired elements that in turn suggest a possible new future where Western cultural hegemony will be overturned (Yaszek 2015). Octavia E. Butler's 1980 novel *Wild Seed* presents a distinct connection between African identity and posthuman existence. The protagonist, Anyanwu, is of African origin and has supernatural powers, including being immortal and able to transform into any shape she wants to. The story's antagonist, Doro, is also immortal by way of snatching other peoples' bodies, and in contrast to Anyanwu, he is a selfish immoral character with wild ambitions of breeding a new species of superhumans:

> Most often, however, he thought of her when he bred together her African and American descendants. He was striving to create a more stable, controlled Nweke, and he had had some success – people who could perceive and to some degree control the inner workings not only of their own bodies, but the bodies of others. But their abilities were not dependable. They brought agony as often as they brought relief. They killed as often as they healed. They could perform what ordinary doctors saw as miracles – or, as easily, as accidentally, what the most brutal slaveholder would see as atrocities. Also, they did not live long. Sometimes they made lethal mistakes within their own bodies and could not correct them in time. Sometimes relatives of their dead patients killed them. Sometimes they committed suicide. The better ones committed suicide – often after an especially ghastly failure. They needed Anyanwu's control. Even now, if he could, Doro would have liked to breed her with some of them – let her give birth to superior human children for a change instead of the animal young she must have borne over her years of freedom. But it was too late for that. She was spoiled. She had known too much freedom. Like most wild seed, she had been spoiled long before he met her. (2001: 217)

Butler's narrative is complex and does not advocate one particular position, but its underlying fascination for a liberation that would put millennia of suppression of Africans in a new perspective cannot be denied. Another political agenda of the posthuman is related to gender. One of the primary claims in Donna Haraway's *The Cyborg Manifesto* is that gender could be reconfigured in a technologically dominated future, and the much more complex idea of gender that has evolved in the past decades also moves us

away from a binary concept of gender. Much earlier, Virginia Woolf offered an artistic vision of this in *Orlando*, a novel which in many ways stands out in her oeuvre for its depictions of seemingly unreal scenarios of prolonged life and a complicated existence between genders. Previously seen as a strange outlier in her work, *Orlando* is now considered to be a visionary take on the human future, something that Woolf explicitly alluded to in an almost surrealist side note in *A Room of One's Own*:

> The human frame being what it is, heart, body, and brain all mixed together, and not contained in separate compartments as they will be no doubt in another million years, a good dinner is of great importance to good talk. One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.
>
> (Woolf 1989: 18)

Woolf was not a promoter of a transhuman agenda, but she was obviously fascinated by the possibility of a different world and of a change in human nature. She was also not a stranger to science fiction – she read Olof Stapledon's work and wrote him an appreciative letter. The science fiction writer Kim Stanley Robinson, whose *2312* speculates on the colonization of space and a radical change of humanity with fluid gender roles, argues that Stapledon's influence on Woolf was more than ephemeral:

> These strange novels made a real impact on Woolf. After reading them, her writing changed. She had always been interested in writing historically, but her stream-of-consciousness style made that difficult to accomplish. Her character Orlando's fantastically long life, and the chapter "Time Passes" in *To the Lighthouse*, were two attempts at solving this problem.
>
> (Robinson 2009)

Apart from the longer life, Stapledon envisioned a world of telepathic beings that could share their information and states of mind. This must also have resonated with Woolf, whose work explores how the individual exists in a social fabric where the hopes of being emerged in the stream of voices is countered by the fear of losing one's individual agency. This seems all the more relevant today. The contemporary world of communication has created new ways in which the nonhuman and the posthuman meet. We can no longer be certain that a text has been written by a human, or that a translation has not been carried out by a machine. We know for sure that when our gadgets answer our questions, more or less intelligently, we are not communicating with another human being, although it sometimes seems to be the case. Literature has long been fascinated by this: Karel Čapek's play *R.U.R.* from 1920 is most famous for using the word "robot" for the first time. However, it is

also a strikingly forward-looking reflection on how humans could create artificial life to initially serve as workers, but with the risk of developing into something more advanced that could become a rebellious threat to humanity. Decades prior to Čapek, in 1872, Samuel Butler imagined in *Erewhon* a future where machines would have developed intelligence and enslaved humanity. Imagining this today seems like a much more modest leap in thinking than what Butler suggested when the telegraph and the newly invented telephone were the most sophisticated means of communication. What these technologies have in common with the technologies we have in the digital age is that they are a means of reaching each other despite large distances, sometimes as an illusion of being globally connected. In any case, they are part of a world where places and connections are more complex than ever.

Universal Thinking under Pressure

The idea of human universals arises against the backdrop of a complicated history of imperialism, slavery, and racism, but even more so against the background of a longing for a common human ground that will overcome difference. This desire has been a strong force in literature, philosophy, and politics, the last of which has recently been expressed by several attempts to ensure more or less binding universal human rights. Ironically, the movements sketched here that seek to think beyond humanity can also be seen as a call for thinking about human universality. World literature studies will always be confronted with the dilemma of focusing on what seems to be universal while also respecting local differences. Literary criticism has a long history of dealing with otherness, but in different ways. Sometimes it turns its back on the world and focuses on national differences, between city and province, between high and low. When the differences between people and cultures are in the center, this can turn into a genuine inquiry about the other, but oftentimes also into exoticizing the unknown in a way that does little to raise understanding. With the nonhuman and the posthuman, the other has the effect of pointing not to differences but to the universal in humans. As I have suggested elsewhere (Thomsen 2016), climate change and the posthuman are two significant challenges to humanity's future existence that require a global response from a united humanity.[9]

9 One of the most shocking figures to most people would be that livestock outweighs wild mammals and birds ten-fold. Such figures make it clear that the divide between culture and nature is not sustainable in its traditional form. Source: https://ourworldindata.org/life-on-earth.

While being both challenging and politically important, the nonhuman and the posthuman differ significantly in terms of their potential for bringing about the enchantment of the world.[10] The wider sense of nature and the engagement with the emotions of other species, however anthropomorphic at times, are quite different from the almost exclusively dystopian visions of a posthuman future. Literature about the posthuman addresses the paradox that humanity is exceptional, not least with the declaration of human rights, and particularly valuable, but with so much room for improvement. Beyond the obvious candidates for improvement, such as health and longevity as well as cognitive capacities, it is worth questioning how perfect human morality is and how our aesthetic sensibility can be improved. Posthumanist fiction suggests that this will not necessarily be by technological means but rather through a change in mindset and behavior toward others.

Margaret Atwood is one of few writers to combine an ecologically oriented nonhuman perspective with a technological focus on genetic development. In her *MaddAddam* trilogy, she creates a post-apocalyptic world inhabited by humans, posthumans, and new species of animals, all sharing a world where societies have collapsed and new agendas for power struggles have been established. Her novels combine a sense of being thrown back into a prehistoric landscape with experiences of advanced technology that creates new species and interferes with the natural course of life. While other fictions often tend to focus on either the environment or the potentials of technology, Atwood integrates both in her fiction, not as a prediction of an immediate or likely future but as a powerful thought experiment about how both elements shape the world.

Atwood's trilogy is post-apocalyptic and characters are struggling to find order. Contrary to this, a number of posthuman novels imagine that a world government would be a part of a changed humanity. Aldous Huxley imagined this in *Brave New World* and others have followed, not with elaborate political visions but with an essential call for thinking of humanity as one, perhaps not equal, but still moving in the same direction. And this raises the question: What is the vision of the world between climate change and transhumanism, and what role can the human play without losing its humanity? Should it be a quest for preserving or a quest for expanding? That is the kind of universal thinking that literature reacts to, and which only makes sense in the optics of planetary literature.

10 For a comprehensive introduction to contemporary enchantment, see Landy and Saler 2009.

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World Literature as Planetary Literature

SARAH NUTTALL

The recent rise of the planetary as an invocation for the *world-now* indicates a number of profound geo-social shifts which have coalesced in their first phase around the notion of the Anthropocene. An understanding of humans as geological agents has been one of the most convincing conceptual resources of this phase, undoing as it does the long-held separation between social and natural history (Chakrabarty 2009). Secondly, an escalating crisis of world ecologies has thrown itself into relief against the international system of nation-states in relation to which so much political history and theory has derived. This has produced a renewed focus, variously, on the world as a living organism (contrary to a giant and accelerating machine); on the resources of a shared ecology in the face of histories of alterity and difference, as well as emancipatory discourses of political freedom; and on extended conceptions of agency including the independent agencies of natural systems – as well as the ever-growing power of intelligent technical systems. Finally, it has produced a renewed focus on materiality – at a time when late capitalist life is becoming more and more abstract and immaterial, including in relation to labor itself. I argue for the distinctiveness of the call to the planetary in its twenty-first-century form without discounting its historical antecedents. As is usual in the conceptual corridors and circuits an era instantiates, most recently in relation to globalization, a number of theorists insist that we have seen it all before, and that the planetary has long been with us, only to be resurrected now as a new fad for thinking with.

A genealogy of the planet that begins around 1900, when "the paired revelations" of the enormity of the cosmos and the shrinking frontiers of the earth coalesced to produce a "humanly circumscribed globe," has been argued for by Matthew Taylor, for instance (Taylor 2016: 115). It is then, such an argument goes, that we find the origins of the modern world and planetary consciousness to be coeval, and "to uncannily resemble contemporary turns towards planetarity" (115). The greater or lesser repressed

unconscious of this then "new" planetary consciousness, moreover, was imperialism and war, as Derrida's observation that it is precisely at this historical moment that "all wars [become] world wars, worldwide and planetary" suggests (Derrida 2011: 259, cited in Taylor 2016). Concurrent with this was a vision of global peace – comparable to current invocations of "an affirmative and cosmic planetarity," a universe so vast that "all human differences vanish" (Dimock 2006: 55, cited in Taylor 2016). But can the spheres mapped by empire and capital be remapped without retaining their violent topographies, Taylor asks – and can "a truly affirmative planetarity or, for that matter, biopolitics, be constructed of such materials?" (Taylor 2016: 124). Those that argue, moreover, for a planetary ethics (an expanding circle of moral concern, extending to the earth itself) are to be reminded that the notion that our ethics enlarge with our sense of scale has a long history. Does planetarity's large-scale, "world transforming" ambition merely reflect globalization on the Anthropocene's rising tide (Elias and Moraru 2015: xix, cited in Taylor 2016)? Instead of matching our conceptual ethics to a redeeming scale of the world, we should, on this argument, abandon it altogether.

In a different set of debates, focusing on the force of the new necropolitical, the poverty or potency of the "planetary" as a conceptual force for the present is also at stake. In his essay "Necropolitics," Achille Mbembe argues that the notion of Foucauldian biopower is no longer sufficient to account for contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death. Necropolitics, the term he employs instead, points to, and attempts to account for, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of the *living dead* (Mbembe 2003: 39). The essay also outlines repressed topographies of cruelty (the plantation and the colony in particular) and suggests that under conditions of necropower, the lines between resistance and suicide, sacrifice and redemption, martyrdom and freedom are blurred. For Rosi Braidotti, by contrast, writing now in the context of the Anthropocene, necropolitics becomes a tool for reconceptualizing the social, along another order of political fictionalization. Necropolitics here, as Christophe Thouny has read it, "asks us to live as if we were *already dead* . . . as if our world had already gone, as if it had become a thing" (Thouny 2017: 19). This is planetary cartography characterized by a radical alterity to the human and the impossibility of access to exteriority of any sort (see also Heise 2008). This form of the necropolitical involves a process of coming out from catastrophe, and of the rhetoric of risk aversion and at times hypermasculine hyperbole, and learning to live with worlds that die (Thouny 2015). It is through this mode of

fictionalization that we can begin to experience the planetary. Such a theoretical disposition, the work of Braidotti and others suggests, requires reading more and more closely the ground of our experience, embedded and embodied in ways that feminist materialist epistemologies have long suggested.

We must place centrally in our reflections here, as Franz Fanon, Saadiya Hartman, and Toni Morrison and many others have shown us, those whose entire worlds have died or ended before, destroyed by racism, slavery, colonialism – and who have learned to live again, to persist in being (Bennett 2017). The notion of the *unthought* belongs to Hartman in particular, placing capitalism's imbrication with the slave plantation as fundamental to a critical rethinking of a political and philosophical position in which we find ourselves together, but not the same. In Braidotti's terms, this is a form of planetary entanglement of being in this "together but not as one" (2017). Embedded in anticolonial and anti-blackness critique, Sylvia Wynter has argued that the opportunity that radical climate change and the advent of the Anthropocene presents is the possibility of starting on a journey toward the human for the very first time, given the necropolitical history and plantation politics of the planet thus far. In Wynter's terms, politicizing the work of theorists who resist race as a conceptual category at the center of the world and its aftermaths, we can only be ethically drawn to the work of the planetary in so far as it propels us toward a notion of "the human yet to come" (2015: 23).

What, then, of literature as planetary form? In order to consider this uncertain possibility, I turn first to several important articulations of world literature and the contemporary history of the novel. Debjani Ganguly, in her book *This Thing Called The World: The Contemporary Novel as Global Form*, argues that around the historically significant threshold of 1989, a new kind of novel as a global literary form emerged at the conjuncture of three critical phenomena: the geopolitics of war and violence since the end of the Cold War; hyperconnectivity through advances in information technology; and the emergence of "a new humanitarian sensibility in a context where suffering has a presence in everyday life through the immediacy of digital images" (2016: 1). The world novel form in its current phase, she goes on, is a distinct product of the age of informational capitalism in the sense that its capacity to be world-oriented is inextricably linked to work as "a unit in real time on a planetary scale" (Castells 2010: 101, cited in Ganguly 2016). For Ganguly, 1989 becomes a potent phenomenological horizon to which the contemporary novel form, heteroglossic, polymorphous, open-ended, and irrefutable

product of mutating capitalist lifeworlds, responds. The "world" in literature, she insists, can operate as the realm of the "immanent and imagined rather than the flattened and fungible" (Ganguly 2016: 79), as a resource of "fictionalization" requiring our renewed critical analysis and attention.

What becomes significant from the vantage point of 2020 is how many distinctive "thresholds of criticality" (Ganguly 2016: 6) we have crossed since the worlds shaped by the 1989 moment (the ending of apartheid and the falling of the Berlin wall being symbolic cultural determinants of that millennial age). Along with the rise of exceptional inequality and the unprecedented government of human mobility in the opening decades of the twenty-first century has been the sharp ascent of extensive climate change. The first issue this raises for literary form and contemporary critical archives is one of defamiliarization. So, for example, as we read keys texts in postcolonial theory generally produced before 2012, including the commentaries and critical frames they deploy to analyze novels, we find them to belong to another world order, a different order of the world, one in which the planet *as question* does not generally appear. In many of these critical traditions, it is the possibility of human freedom, and the fight for emancipation from colonialism, apartheid, and capitalism that shapes the intellectual terrain. Despite historical articulations of the planetary, and notwithstanding the ready critiques of what it means to amplify scale to produce further catastrophism, the acceleration of the meaning of the planetary predicament, of the planetary as predicament, changes the way we read. A sustained practice of rereading takes place, as we return to earlier texts with new questions: what can they tell us now, we ask, about the matters that sustain life itself – water, air, atmospheres, earth. How can we reread what we took to be "setting" as agentive nonhuman form; what kind of assembly does "character" convene; what sorts of unexpected collocations become possible when everything is in play?

The twentieth-century modernist novel valorized style and "observation" (of the everyday, of character, and emotional feel) and was disdainful of the improbable, Ghosh points out – though magic realism, and its own antecedents in surrealism, was a genre replete with events "that have no relation to the calculus of probability" (2016: 23). To the contrary, the climate conditions we now live with, improbable as they may be, are nevertheless indisputably real. He points to ethical difficulties that arise in treating them as magical, metaphorical, or allegorical. That the formerly improbable – the earthquake that causes the tsunami that causes the nuclear explosion as in Fukushima, Japan, in 2012 – begins to weld itself to a condition of everydayness, a "quotidian

unexpectedness" (Le Menager 2017), as we live at the edge of modernity in a new kind of way, as Latour has widely argued, all of this suggests what Ganguly has recently referred to as a form of *planetary realism* (2020). What this might imply, as critical and novelistic form, is a deepening engagement with, and imaginative transmutation of, the earth sciences and their modes of scientific understanding. But where does this leave critical theory, literary studies, fictional form? How and on what terms can the humanities and the sciences even begin to translate each other into a common and critical language for our times?

Some of the most responsive critical resources in this terrain have come from reflections on terraqueous form and hydropolitics in the burgeoning field of Indian Ocean studies and Southern oceanic humanities. Scholars working in these fields have drawn on wider insights that Black Atlantic studies in general, and Paul Gilroy's eponymous book *The Black Atlantic* specifically, inaugurated a new generation of thinking about race in transoceanic ways in which the sea became a space for theorizing the materiality of history yet rarely figured as a material itself (DeLoughrey 2017: 33). Indian Ocean literatures have been reread and reconceptualized in terms of "littoral literature," "coastal form," "amphibian aesthetics," the shifting "ecotones" of the shoreline to consider, in Samuelson's words, how the view from the littoral "lever open continental categories and offers new models for world literature" (Samuelson 2017: 18). Much of this work has articulated an undoing of imperial cartographies in which land figured as presence, and sea as absence. Bystrom and Hofmeyr invoke "hydrocolonialism" as an ongoing site of exchange between older oceanic models tracing imperial routes from land to sea and submarine models in which "re-ontologize thes processes" (2017: 5). This work has led to more work being produced on longtime indigenous engagements with the sea as constituting a decolonised oceanic studies.

The hydrocolonial, immersing concepts or theories instead of encountering them in their "dry forms,"[1] is but one signal aspect of a cultural conceptual idiom reconstituting itself in relation to what we might consider in terms of planetary form. In what follows I offer synoptic readings of three texts, Lindsay Collen's novel *Mutiny*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, and Hang Kan's *The Vegetarian*, in order to get at what the planetary might serve to reveal – or obscure – about the literary and political present in relation to the terms mapped out above.

1 These ideas are developed in the National Research Foundation Proposal called "Southern African Literatures: Hydrocolonial Perspectives," with co-investigators Isabel Hofmeyr, Charne Lavery, and Sarah Nuttall.

On Rain and Pluvial Time

Collen's 2001 Mauritian novel *Mutiny* has to date been critically discussed largely in terms of the key concerns of a late postcolonial and evolving Indian Ocean conceptual paradigm. These readings draw upon and elaborate Megan Vaughan's historical scholarship on Mauritian society as containing multiple different islands of "exile and exclusion" (2005: 2), as well as Elleke Boehmer's work on transnationalism and networks of resistance. More widely they can be inscribed within conceptual work on the Indian Ocean *as method* (Hofmeyr 2012). Here, transnational and oceanic forms of analysis come to the fore and the Indian Ocean is shown to operate historically and conceptually beyond both nation-state and area studies trajectories, rendering visible multiple lateral networks that move across the global South, especially Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia (see also Bremner 2014). Hofmeyr draws on Engseng Ho's scholarship on the historical depth of the Indian Ocean world, home to the world's oldest transoceanic long-distance trading systems, and on Amitav Ghosh's illuminations of an ancient Indian Ocean archive of transnational forms of imagination. Colonial and postcolonial histories, many of them Atlantic based, are shown to be challenged by this other "complicating sea" (Hofmeyr 2007). All of these readings and the analytical frames they generate consider the sea, and the weather, as sites of human inscription, upon which colonialism, violence, and other forms of human activity are written; they generally do not function materially as sites of contestation and imagination. Yet the novel has far more to tell us about the pluvial as a mode of the oceanic – rain and sea – and about human and nonhuman chronicities than previous commentators have focused on. Juna Bhim and Leila Sadal have been confined in the Women's High Security Electronic Prison, once a reform school, for crimes they may or may not have committed according to a multitude of Mauritian laws and criminal codes, many of them dating back to colonial times. Much of the first part of *Mutiny* is a reflection on time, on "doing time," that is, on prison time. Soon this becomes spliced with another, seasonal and cyclonic time, first sensed through its smell and then its coloring of the air as purple.

Rain, mixed in part with seawater borne on wind, brings with it a dream of the deep sea from which a first form of human mutiny derives. The mutinous plan involves the disabling of the computerized electronic codes to the prison doors in the eye of the approaching cyclone. Should the eye of the cyclone not fall over the prison complex, the plan to mutiny will not work. For a novel written in 2001, Collen's prescience in relation to the emerging

temporalities of the anthropocenic novel form is striking. The materialities of rain, sea, and time are woven and juxtaposed with human-generated language, meaning, and action. Melody Jue argues that time and space can increasingly be understood to be shaped by both "natural media" (2018: 480) and digital media. Collen's text works with both the digital capture of worlds as scanned, computerized phenomena, including prisons – and the production of uncaptured meanings derived from environmental milieus, here sea-ocean-rain-water. Collen, across the novel, takes back the meaning of certain words as she works across different media, in Jue's terms. The word *conviction*, for instance, is wrenched slowly away from legal parlance and state violence and drawn into the grammar of a weather-allied time of mutinous resistance. As the eye of the mega-cyclone moves above them, their conviction, a form of heightened sensitivity built in the midst of rain time, turns rock-solid and viral at the same time.

Pluvial time and ocean ontologies produce a heterochronicity, "a mixed temporality, both earth-based and human-made" (Jue 2018: 480). Rain and sea constitute what Jue refers to as untranslatable elements that cannot be captured by pixels. Terrestrial contexts such as the prison industrial complex and specifically the carceral island complex are placed in tantalizing tandem in this novel with the "thalassic wild" (480). Collen repeatedly draws pluvial time and ocean ontologies together in *Mutiny*, offering as she does so a specificity to Indian Ocean islandness. During the massive eye of the double tropical cyclone, just before the mutiny begins its final stages, Juna has a dream again of the undersea, a dream of emancipation away from the terrestrial surface. This time, it is of the deep sea as a place *off world* as it were, away from the earth's surface and its histories of violence. Juna dreams she is deep down in the sea, amongst "spirals and filigrees, funnels and half-moons, pipes and plates, beehive cells and infundibulae" (Collen 2001: 301), looking up to the surface of the water, to the watery edge, that is, of terrestrial life, "as if through glass, there are clouds racing past in dark grey colours like coarse prison blankets" (301). From her thalassic vantage point, the terrestrial earth appears as a large, multi-sited prison.

The novelist works with motifs of multiple imprisonments. The prison is figured several times as a ship, specifically as a slave ship. In the eye of the mega-cyclone, the "dead prison building" (324) comes alive with wild pouring rain and floating, flying, chaotic vegetation. Collen refers in her acknowledgments to her own girls' boarding school in South Africa as a mode of "incarceration," and in *Mutiny* the Women's High Security Electronic Prison was once, we are told, a reform school for girls. In her acknowledgments, Collen thanks several waves

of co-accused with whom she was arrested, imprisoned, and placed on trial on political charges under criminal laws, in both Mauritius and South Africa. The novel ends with the news that Juna Bhim is back in prison and that the mutiny has not produced human freedom but further imprisonment. Cycles of violence continue and repeat, and the cyclone has offered only a temporary and fragile alliance with human resistance. "When that cyclone departed, how quickly it went away . . . Arms laid down too soon . . . This time I have tools secreted away all over the cell" (341–42). The novel suggests cycles of resistance that accrue and secrete their tools in a deliberative manner, waiting for the moment to mutiny, watching the anthropocenic storm clouds gathering, making a bid for rain time, and its natural media work. In the section below, we push further into the novel as planetary form, and character as vertebrate and imprinted at the limits of the human. The novel I turn to is Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*.

On Tide and Narrative

The Hungry Tide has received far less critical attention to date than Ghosh's other works. Yet it has the most to tell us, arguably, about what might constitute a planetary literature in its early phase. It is a novel of the Sundarbans, an archipelago of islands known as the "tide country." The Sundarbans are a watery network of marine streams, mudshores, and mangrove forests located in both Bangladesh and India. The tides are so large that approximately one-third of the land disappears and reappears every day. Deeply concerned with the struggles of the dispossessed, the novel weaves profoundly human predicaments and power struggles to the death with the intricacy and fragility of ecosystems. The powers of place at times overwhelm the intimate interiority of human character, but unevenly so, and it is the unresolved struggle for form, including form at the limits of the human, that marks the novel's liminality, its attempt to find form in relation to the hydrocolonial, its implicit probing of the novel *as question*, that makes it valuable to us here. The structure of the novel is itself tidal in ways I will allude to below, but it is ultimately the question of the meaning of the corpse and its necropolitics that it returns us to, this time as a philosophical condition for thinking the planetary, as the anthropomorphic and as species being.

The Hungry Tide stages well-honed postcolonial themes of the problems of translation and untranslatability – between and across race, caste, gender, generation, and diasporic identities. More than this, the novel confronts the disconnections between a human-centered language and that which is not only untranslatable but beyond language all together – the silent, the nonhuman, the elemental. Piya, a Bengali cetologist from Seattle, is drawn more

and more intricately into a profound but silent relationship with Fokir, a dispossessed fisherman who can speak no English. The two parts of the book are called *Bhata* (The Ebb) and *Jowar* (The Flood) and read closely, the structure of the narrative itself treats specific scenes, interior morphologies, and elemental encounters as tides that ebb and flow. Ebb is figured as silting, a falling away in part of depth, inwardness, interiority. Flood figures massive storms, devouring appetites, monstrousness, ingestion, fear, formlessness, the Thing itself ("there was nothing there"; "I saw it"). Textual repertoires rise, fall, and repeat as ebb and flow, suggesting strongly, as the novel as a whole does, narrative as mythological structure which elaborates and repeats. More radically, it induces in us a sense of what water might look like if it had memory, or even the question: do the tides remember? It internalizes into narrative the structure of the tidal in the sense that linear models of time are distorted and ruptured with immersion into the ocean itself (Deloughrey 2017: 33). The perpetual circulation of currents means that "the sea dissolves phenomenological experience and diffracts the accumulation of narrative" (33).

In one such example of this literary ecology, Kanai as a young man wants to shelter Kusum, Fokir's mother, from mortal danger: "he wanted his body to become a buffer between her and the world" (Ghosh 2005: 109). This image and textual formulation returns a generation later in a tidal manner and floods the most profoundly rendered scene in the book, the brief penultimate chapter called "The Wave." Piya and Fokir have been stranded in a massive storm surge far upriver. In a devastating and intensely erotic (though not eroticized) scene, Fokir ties them together to a tree branch with a piece of cloth that was once his mother's sari. The massive storm hurls objects through the air at them. First "a large clump of mangroves, held together by the trees intertwined roots"; then a "shack spinning above them" (382). This Piya recognizes as the shrine Fokir worshipped at, and where he feels closest to his dead mother, Kusum. The stronger the wind blows "the more closely her body became attuned to the buffers between which she was sandwiched: the tree in front and Fokir behind" (382). The tree takes some of the force of the objects that the cyclone is hurling at them. Fokir's fingers are "knotted around her stomach"; he is so close that soon her lungs "adapted to the rhythm of his diaphragm as it pumped in and out of the declivity of her lower back" (383). As a tidal wave as large as a city block sweeps in toward them, the tree bends double and they are underwater, the water "pulling at their bodies as if it were trying to dismember them" (383). As they reemerge from the water, the trees, stripped of their leaves by the cyclone, have become "skeletal" (388), and the wind changes course:

now, where she had the tree trunk to shelter her before, there is only Fokir's body. "Their bodies were so close, so finely merged, that she could feel the impact of everything hitting him . . . She could feel the bones of his cheeks as if they had been superimposed on her own" (390). Fokir dies into her as he is hit by a huge uprooted stump. The sari has kept them attached to the trunk even as he was dying. Much later, she leaves his body on the tree, tied to the trunk with the sari.

Fokir "wanted his body to become a buffer between her and the world." Fokir dies not only into Piya but comes closer in death to his dead mother; he also dies in his element, the upper reaches of the Sundarbans and their cyclical cyclonic storms. The figuration of his dying and dead body echoes textual formulations that Ghosh employs across the novel as a whole. For example: "The Raimangal did not look like a river at all: it looked more like a limb of the sea" (36), and in an earlier sequence than the one above, "their arms became living roots, like those of the tree that has given them shelter" (147). Does Fokir's corpse have agency or is it just matter? The dead body still imprints another body. The living body is cradled by that body. It receives support and protection through something that has form and an imprint that has character. Character, here, is not distinguished from these forms that support it. His body also becomes the tree that shelters Piya, in its vertebrateness.[2] Thus we have a sense of the corpse as a form of worldmaking. A form of worldmaking that cuts across poetic, psychoanalytic, and material discourses of form. Fokir's skeletal form remains tied to the vertebrae of the tree, as Piya descends into the water.

Ranjana Khanna has referred to the anthropomorphic and the planetary as the most recent phase in the relationship between the global and the novel form (2020). In reflecting on what is, or may be, at stake in this recent phase characterized by the entanglement of the species and the planetary, she suggests we turn to the figuration of death as a way of thinking species. She further argues that we do so through the figure of the corpse, and the forensic imagination that accompanies it. It is the corpse, in its "complex physicality, which marks 'the end,'" in a specific and historically freighted way. Freud, she recalls, wrote about how mass destruction in World War I changed the way we understand death. In other words, it "forced us to think about the human at a number of different scales." The arrival of massive force changes our thinking about a culture's relationship

2 Thank you to our class session at Bologna Summer School on Form at the Limits of the Human.

to the corpse, she points out, recalling too, Marx's view that death brings "an undertaking of species being." "What kind of thinking is enabled in relation to the corpse?" she asks, adding that "animating the corpse as the factor alongside which culture emerges" (the question of modern death and sovereignty) enables us to decipher the age, as well as the relationship of the novel form to our era of world (2020: 410). If Collen dealt with the figuration of social death as repeated incarceration and a question of the earth itself as a prison rather than the corpse as such, Fokir's vertebrate imprint onto a living body and against a skeletal tree inside a storm animates a contemporary form of death it would be hard to think outside of the planetary.

The Hungry Tide was published in the summer of 2004. A few months after the publication, on the night of December 25, Ghosh was in his family home in Calcutta. The next morning, he learned that a cataclysmic tsunami had been set off by a massive undersea earthquake in the Indian Ocean the night before. "The images that has been implanted in my mind during the writing of *The Hungry Tide* merged with live television footage of the tsunami in a way that was almost overwhelming. I became frantic; I could not focus on anything. A couple of days later, I wrote to a newspaper and obtained a commission to write about the impact of the tsunami on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands" (Ghosh 2016: 34). This anecdote, and the uncanniness of the real shadowing the fictional, returns us to the question of planetary realism posed above. While it is the critical idiom and philosophical conundrum of the corpse of species-being that is, I have suggested, the gyre on which his novel ultimately turns, the refusal of the real on which that critical theoretical practice often depends for its particular insights leaves it too unshaken by "a world that is, by itself, fully articulated and active" (Latour 2014: 14). Planetarity, and its forms of death, will require thinking aspects of both, in ways that remain almost entirely unresolved as yet. The full force of critical theoretical work, as well as the realism of climate as material condition and organic medium of death, will each have to inhabit contemporary forms of thought and analysis. We turn next to a novel which works with the human as arborphiliac form in the context of an intensely complex rendering of female body politics.

On Plants and the In-Human

Han Kang, author of the Korean novel *The Vegetarian*, writes from the vantage point of a "deep despair and doubt" (2016) about humanity. In

interviews, she discusses her profound preoccupation with human violence and about wanting to find, through her writing, "the root cause of why embracing the human was such a painful thing for me" (n.p.). In *The Vegetarian* Kang creates an arborphiliac character who is trying to throw off the human as such. Kan's character Yeong-hye makes an extreme attempt to get outside of, away from, human violence by turning to behavior that is more plantlike. She attempts to replace eating with photosynthesis, as she moves through a sequence which begins with vegetarianism and leads on to an attempt at becoming vegetal. In her dread for the human, she ends up not so much with a new form of seeing as with the question: "why is it such a bad thing to die?" Yeong-hye begins to experience her body as weaponized: "can only trust my breasts now . . . I like my breasts; nothing can be killed by them. Hand, foot, tongue, gaze, all weapons from which nothing is safe" (2015: 33). Her vegetarianism is doubly an attempt to avoid "feeding on blood" that is also a rejection of living as an animal herself.

The novel has three sequences, narrated in three voices. In the first, Yeong-hye is referred to only as "my wife" and the narrative voice is her husband's. The opening sentence of the book reads: "Before my wife turned vegetarian, I'd always thought of her as completely unremarkable in every way" (3). Alone all day in a city apartment, one day with the force of revelation which is also mental anguish, she begins on a path to ejecting her human animal self (the violence of others toward her and her feeling of complicity in the human capacity for this violence): she stops cooking and eating meat, eggs, most food; then stops wearing a bra, and avoids sex ("your body smells of meat" [17]). Her husband refuses to "read" her and is at the same time sexually drawn to her blankness: "I resisted the temptation to indulge in introspection . . . This strange situation had nothing to do with me" (19). He becomes aroused seeing her lying there in the dark staring up at the ceiling, "her face blank, as though she were a 'comfort woman' dragged in against her will, and I was the Japanese soldier demanding her services" (30). When her father tries to stuff pork into her mouth and a means of disciplining her, "my wife growled and spat out the meat. An animal cry of distress burst from her lips" (40). When he sees her at the hospital to which she is admitted sitting naked to the waist in the sunlight on a bench next to a fountain, he thinks to himself, "I do not know that woman" (52). His sister-in-law, opposing the violence of her father towards her sister, nevertheless avers that "human beings need certain nutrients" (36).

The second sequence is told through the eyes of her brother-in-law. He is a failed video artist full of narcissistic longing. He is obsessed with an image

he once saw of bodies covered in plants. He wants to find a way to make it come alive. In his sketchbook, in which he plans the installation of live art he wants to make, the bodies are having sex. Though her face is missing, the woman in his sketch is his sister-in-law, Yeong-hye. He asks her to come to his studio, to take her clothes off, and to let him paint her body with plants. "Her face was so utterly devoid of expression, it was impossible for him to guess what was going on inside her mind" (79). He recalls that in the hospital she was admitted to a while back, she kept taking her clothes off and trying to expose herself to the sunlight, and considers that she might at this point be "more vegetal than sexual" (83), a "body from which desire has been eliminated" (85). He decides to film himself painting her. "Whether human, animal or plant, she could not be called a person" (88), he thinks. But for his art installation "he needed authenticity and that meant actual penetration" (96). In preparing for this scene, he finds that "he was living with a new intensity" (100).

In the final part, narrated by her sister but with much more attention to her own thoughts, expression, and feelings, Yeong-hye has been admitted to hospital for a final time. Not long before the day of her sister's visit, a nurse had found Yeong-hye deep in the surrounding woods covering the mountain slope, "standing there stick still and soaked with rain as if she herself was one of the glistening trees" (125). Her doctors diagnose her as anorexic and schizophrenic. They, too, try to force her to eat. "I need to water my body. I don't need this kind of food, sister. I need water" (148), Yeong-hye says. "They say my insides have all atrophied you know" (153). Her sister asks: "Are you trying to die? . . . If all you want to do is become a tree, you still have to eat. You have to live" (155). Yeong-hye counters: "Why, is it such a bad thing to die?" (157). She is described by her sister finally as "an inchoate mass formed of darkness and water" (127).

The Vegetarian is by no means a novel conceived on the scale of the planetary, but it nevertheless speaks with an original voice to what is arguably the most resounding question of our now advanced planetary predicament: the human as *form of life*. It draws us to the notion of having once been human, of the human co-constituted with other forms of life, in this case, plants and trees, and it emplaces its notion of the body as final refuge in the context of inescapable human violence. It speaks profoundly to extreme urban isolation in late capitalism, a waning away, here, of a female self – eviscerated by labile layers of male violence – and to the evacuation of the human form and a form of human life saturated with killing and weaponized with the capacity to hurt and harm. These it embeds in historically rich and

specific associations, including the use of thousands of Korean women as "comfort women" for Japanese soldiers; a marital relation becomes distilled into a comfort woman–soldier predatory exchange. We might think of Kang's work in this novel as exploring what Terence Cave has called, in another context, forms of *collocation*, *yoking*, and *affordance* – joinings more than juxtapositions, co-constituents, forming "incessant probings" at the boundaries of our known urban worlds (2018: 294). Woman and plant, woman as tree, offers nothing more than an imaginative yoking as a means of getting rid of a "human" that is experienced as violent to its core.

In a quite different, and nonfictional and anthropological frame, Julie Archambault writes about plant–human relations in the small Mozambican town of Inhambane. In a place where human intimacy has been commodified and decimated in conditions of mass post-socialist poverty and inequality, young men who cannot "afford" women turn to their plants as a way to try to understand non-commodified forms of love and intimacy. Kenneth, a gardener in Inhambane, talks about his plants as his lovers ("My plants are my lovers"). Human–plant relations offer "templates" for lost human-to-human intimacies (2016: 244). The love of plants is productive of not-yet-human social relations modeled on human–plant collocations. Here, too, the notion of having once been human comes into play *as question*: what might it take, a Mozambican gardener, or an isolated woman in a sky-high one-bedroomed apartment in Seoul, to become human for the first time?

In concluding this section, however, I return to the changing figuration of the corpse as an animating factor in which we might read culture in an age of species-being. Khanna suggested above that we read the corpse as the factor alongside which the temporal specificity and scale of a culture emerges. More specifically, one might ask: how might thinking "next to the corpse" animate the novel form as such? More precisely yet, how might this heuristic device be deployed as a means of thinking about some of the transitions that might be happening between the rubrics of world literature and planetary literature? If Collen's novel *Mutiny* explores complex human and nonhuman alliances in the face of ongoing and repeated cycles of incarceration, Ghosh's novel portrays the corpse as an outer-worldly character, giving support, imprinting a body, and performing an ongoing act of worldmaking even as it has exited the human and died into the elemental, the Sundarbans themselves. In Kang's novel, Yeong-hye's coming death by late capitalism and the patriarchal forms of damage that inhabit it, in part in its specifically Korean iterations, takes the form of a coming corpse as tree. "I am not an animal any more" (2015: 153), Yeong-hye tells her sister towards the end, and

"all I need is sunlight" (154). As her sister leaves the hospital for the final time, she stares fiercely at the trees. "As if waiting for an answer. As if protesting against something" (183). It is the corpse as non-animal form that is offered here.

Conclusion

It may be that we should be less interested in adjudicating the question "is this the planetary?" than in discerning some of the effects of projecting notions of the planetary onto the present, learning things from their refraction in the process.[3] That is, we might discern some of the possible meanings of the planetary, and specifically of planetary literature, if we think of it in terms of febrile acts of projection – a series of acts that cause something to jut out or protrude so that we can see it, if in a fevered form; or at least can refract back to us what we may be missing if we discount the planetary as a mode of reading and writing. Such acts of projection can also be thought of as heuristic devices that can operate in emerging terrains of thought to the scale of the planet.

Perhaps planetarity itself is unsustainable? What if we refused to fight (for say, the future) on the scale of the planet – and went instead on general strike? Practiced, that is, a "silent, open-ended prolongation; an ongoing abeyance of the globe"; "a general slowing . . . a passive resistance, a conscientious objection to the world," as Taylor would have it. A "common stoppage of the work, consumption and hostilities that shape our world: an end of the world brought about not by apocalypse but by principled, strategic, difficult inaction (2016:132)." That call for a world-scale strike is sixteen-year-old Greta Thunberg's now, and carries divergent inflections: "We children are calling for the adults to join us . . . to have real impact we must get to the stage where we have continuous general strikes."[4]

And yet: if world literature grew out of our readings in theories of globalization, Marxist analyses of capital, subaltern studies, and postcolonial criticism over the last twenty-five years, it has not prepared us for the shock of the new, the world we now find ourselves in.[5] Climate change, we know,

3 I draw this formulation by Alberto Toscano, who, in an essay entitled "Notes on Late Fascism" (2017), poses a similar question in relation to the rise of fascism in the present.

4 See Thunberg's call, on Twitter and Facebook, for a continuous general strike to the scale of the planet in April 2019 (Watts 2019).

5 This is a key point in Dipesh Chakrabarty's pivotal essay "The Climate of History: Four Theses" (2009).

may well end up accentuating all the inequalities of the capitalist order – but the freedom posited by the Enlightenment and by Marxist humanism has proven to be what Baucom calls "a portal to something else, something catastrophic' (2014: 382). If the proclamation that everything exists equally risks returning philosophy paradoxically to "the sensuous insides of objects while claiming to be tired of one more bout of endless auto-psychoanalysis," as Aravamudan (2013: 21) redolently puts it, we need on the other hand not be immune to the depth of the challenge we face. Even as we may be skeptical of the political consequences of invoking nonhuman forms which "cannot speak back" in the very aftermath of postcolonial transformations, we can also acknowledge that more distributive notions of agency must surely now be important. New forms of death (and therefore life) are emerging in the novels I have read here, and they herald a cultural age we have already entered and can't go back on: a changed and shifting focus which offers the chance to reread novels once confined to human-centered accounts of reflexivity, and to press open again what has always been the novel's greatest achievement, its ability to hold itself to multiple scales and multiple times. It is my view, then, that the planetary *as question* is animating the novel form for our age, overhauling its richest potential once again, testing its abilities to new limits.

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